MAGAZINE OF ART

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MORSE PECKHAM: **THE TRIUMPH OF ROMANTICISM**

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ARTIST AND CRITIC

MR. PECKHAM'S article on the page opposite, and Miss Griffin's letter on page 330, prompt a return to a theme broached in the March issue of MAGAZINE OF ART. Our editorial drew attention to some of the problems inherent in present-day writing about the arts, and some of the difficulties that even the friendliest of critics and the most open-minded criticism encounter in trying to hold meaningful conversation with the artist.

Miss Griffin infers an inclination to reproach the artist for these hazards, and some feeling of resentment with him for creating uncalled-for obstacles between himself and his well-wishers. Certainly this was not our intention. It was rather to try to point out that the nature of contemporary painting and sculpture, the manner of its creation and the public position of its creator are such that communication between artist and writer is not easy. Some awareness of this on the part of the writer—it is chiefly up to him—and perhaps of the artist too, and some realization of its causes can be a beginning towards breaking down unwanted barriers.

Miss Griffin suggests that in Oregon friendliness prevails; so it does in New York. But this does not prevent misunderstandings that have little to do with ill-will or personalities. Are Oregon and New York really as different in their artistic climate as Miss Griffin supposes? Though the cosmopolitan atmosphere is more tense, as she says, this can hardly be the whole story, since that attitude of combined eagerness and withdrawal is to be found as often in the "arrived" artist (wherever he is) as in those whose equivalent effort has met with no comparable reward.

Perhaps Miss Griffin and we are looking at different things. She writes that her Oregonian friends lack the pretentiousness of what our editorial called "dedication," and describes them as being "content with the not inconsiderable but more earthly satisfactions attendant upon having found their proper work." Here then is the problem, for the "work" that satisfies the artist is not the "work" for which he is rewarded. Whatever its bread-and-butter mechanisms (exhibitions, teaching or working wives), an artistic career is not simply one of the more hazardous professions but is fundamentally different. It is not that skills vary, that facility is falsely honored and honest labor overlooked, but that the process of creation is altogether incommensurate with the external result obtained.

For the artist, the picture or the sculpture is an approximation of its beginnings. He sees in it less the product than the process and is more aware of the steps along the path he has traveled than of the spot he has reached, and so for him the work has no finality. For the observer, on the contrary, the work is both an unalterable *fait accompli* and a point of departure for his own imagination. These divergences in a social and esthetic point of view are scarcely eternal verities, but are applicable only to what for a century and a half has been called "modern" art.

This leads us to Mr. Peckham's analysis. With an historian's modesty, he has limited himself to the externally describable features of the romantic tradition. He lists these as four: the inseparability of form and content; the acceptance of change and the assumption of growth; uniqueness and diversity; imperfection. Contemporary art shares and even intensifies these qualities, and our present-day forms—however new these may be in appearance—are but outgrowths of a continuing tradition.

Now an art that has these ideals at once calls for and repels commentary and interpretation. Where values are fixed—as in the time previous to Mr. Peckham's "romantic" tradition—a verbal tour of any work (either of its iconography or its form), is comparatively easy, and in its own period almost unnecessary. Precedents count and earlier interpretations of similar themes may be recalled. Judgments of worth invoke previous achievements. But in contemporary art, where uniqueness and change are values, parallels and masters are of little use, and recognizable similarities often block the understanding of a new work. At the same time, where every work is new, each would seem to call for separate elucidation; but where form and content are inseparable because their relation is each artist's own creation, this elucidation can hardly take place without a major distortion of the artist's intention. Here, rather than in any lack of good will, are the reasons that underly the artist's distrust of the verbalization of his pictorial product, while he eagerly awaits evidence that he is understood. But how is the critic to call attention to his work without words?

Mr. Peckham's fourfold analysis suggests another difficulty. The very qualities he enumerates show to what extent the modern artist is identified with his work. Both he and his public tend to fuse (or to confuse) the work with its maker. Interested in exploring the processes of the mind, we use the work of art as a document in the psychology of creation, and too often forget that, once made, it has its own existence—related to, but very different from its genesis.

Art differs from craft, as Miss Griffin says. (Though there are many craftsmen in the arts who suffer from our constant search for uniqueness and authenticity.) And the ways in which modern art differs are at the base of the contemporary artist's ambivalent attitude towards the critic and the public. For him, good will alone will not suffice to make an angelic chorus out of the verbalizing dogs barking up the wrong tree.

R. G.

Willem de Kooning, Warehouse Mannequins, 1951, oil, 25 x 35", Sidney Janis Gallery, photograph Oliver Baker

THE TRIUMPH OF ROMANTICISM

Morse Peckham

Was there ever a culture which held within its framework such esthetic antinomies as ours? Picasso enrages the man in the street; *Ulysses* baffles and infuriates him. And he is wise to be disturbed, for if modern painting and poetry and music and architecture are Art, then whoever is frustrated and angered by them is wrong. "Back to sanity," he cries, for he knows that if modern art is an adequate response and guide to the human condition, then whoever cannot understand it is shut off from man's most recent insights. Yet anyone who has gone through the experience of entering the world of modern art knows how hard it is to reconstruct modes of consciousness.

Even artists are not much help in this reconstruction. T. S. Eliot's "objective correlative" is still being fought over, thirty years after it was announced. It says something, but what? And the cryptic remarks of the modern painters, like Braque's "The senses deform, the mind forms," are even less helpful. The trouble is a lack of historical perspective. Modern artists themselves feel their break with the nineteenth century to be complete; they are sure theirs is a new era. Yet I believe that modern art is not the denial of nineteenth-century romanticism, but its triumph. Perhaps if our naïve man in the street and his often equally naïve brother, the man in the academy,

Henri Matisse, Lady in Blue, Three stages in the evolution of the painting in the collection of John Wintersteen, Philadelphia

can come to see this, they will be less harsh towards modern art—and less disturbed.

Of course, what I call romanticism is not exactly what many others call romanticism. Indeed, my right to the word has been sharply questioned. My usage refers to a specific historical movement —nothing less than a redirection of Western culture. By a series of semantic accidents too complicated to detail here, this romanticism has become confused with what is said to be a general characteristic of some art found at all times and all places. But this general romanticism is not historical romanticism, which is all that concerns me here.

In spite of objections, then, I feel justified in using the term "romanticism," because all historians admit that something tremendously important happened in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and this they call romanticism. Thus I am in the tradition of proper usage, except that I think what I call romanticism was the most important thing that happened, and that my usage either subsumes or rejects other usages. It is best, however, before I go into romanticism, to say in the paragraphs below what I consider to be the essence of modern art.

The most striking philosophical development of the past half-century is the concern with language. There are of course various schools—logical positivists, empiricists, phenomenalists, semanticists—but all are special examples of the same tendency. Reduced to an almost comically simplified level, their various ideas are much the same. Concerned as they are with the relation of scientific propositions to philosophy, they reject "metaphysics," theories about the nature of "reality." Alfred J. Ayer says, "The philosopher is not in a position to furnish speculative truths, which would, as it were, compete with the hypotheses of science, nor yet to pass a priori judgments upon the validity of scientific theories, but his function is to clarify the propositions of science by exhibiting their logical relationships, and by defining the symbols which occur in them." By refining his language so that a sentence contains only one possible meaning, and by developing the structure of language, as in symbolic logic, a scientist can make more inclusive, satisfactory and "meaningful" organizations of his data. If, then, you wish to say something new, the way to do it is not to look for something new with the language at your disposal, but rather to develop the language. You will know that you have done your task successfully if you find that you have created a linguistic structure that organizes your data and simultaneously indicates "holes" in your structure where more data and better organization are needed. What you can say about the sensory data that stimulate the consciousness is limited, directed and determined by the language in which you say it. To say something new, you have to develop your language.

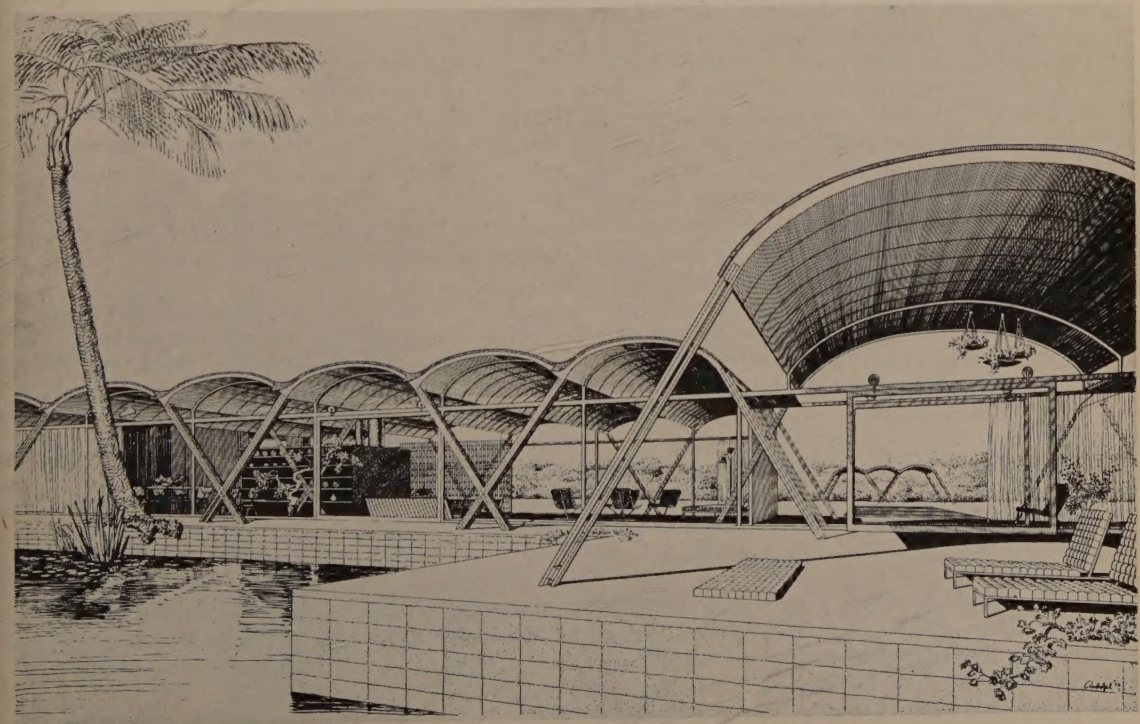
Now this is precisely what the modern artist is doing. I ask the reader to accept the assumption that art is language, and that like scien-

tific language, by organizing certain data, it describes those data. To be sure, there is a great deal about the data of the arts that is cause for disagreement, but I ask the reader to accept *only* the assumption that art has data—that art is not just "emotional expression." The modern artist, then, attempts to develop his control of organization and description by deliberately developing his language, rather than by looking for new data to organize and describe with the language or style currently in use.

Matisse has painted over and over again a particular nude, or a particular goldfish bowl in a particular room, or a particular window looking out on the Mediterranean. Each painting is unique, and in each, if it is one of a series, he gets closer to describing his particular data: that is, his responses to the stimulus afforded by the nude or the bowl or the window. The musician also constantly seeks to develop his style, or language, in order to describe certain data with greater detail and richness and precision, and in order to find new data. The growing acceptance of Berg's *Wozzeck* shows how powerfully successful such an attitude can be.

The situation is the same in poetry; but in

Paul Rudolph, Project for Knott Residence, Yankeetown, Florida, 1951



William H. Brown, Robert W. Kennedy & Carl Koch, Eastgate Apartments, Cambridge, Mass., 1950, photograph Ezra Stoller

the criticism of poetry, because scientific language and poetic language and ordinary language all use words, the situation is much more confused and only beginning to be a little clearer. When one criticizes adequately a new poem, one asks, "Has the poet purified himself of his predecessors?" And then, if appropriate, "Has he shown a technical development over his previous work? Has he developed the range of the linguistic structure peculiar to poetry?" This is why, in spite of his deplorable politics, critics and poets continue to be interested in Pound. He continually develops the technique of poetry, or poetic structure.

Even in architecture there is a growing rebellion against the strongly entrenched Bauhaus and Le Corbusier traditions. Functionalism is being interpreted in a more and more liberal manner, and brilliant young architects sacrifice "function" for the sake of "formal expressiveness," whatever that may mean. But the term makes little difference so long as they are committed to developing the vocabulary of architecture.

As I see it, the relation of the philosophers of language to the "school philosophers" or traditional metaphysicians is exactly analogous to the relation of the modern artist in any field to the academic artist. It is the relation of some schools of architecture to the buildings erected by their university trustees. It is the relation of Matisse, Picasso and Pollock to the members of the National Academy and Norman Rockwell. The one refines his language, makes it flexible and precise, and extends and so organizes and describes new data. The other seeks to master the technique of the traditional styles; and so he can only describe the same data over and over again.

Now this new philosophy of language and these new languages of the arts exhibit certain common patterns. First is their belief in the inseparability of form and content. Here is a quotation from Mark Schorer, a highly respected modern critic:

"Modern criticism, through its exacting scrutiny of literary texts, has demonstrated with finality that in art, beauty and truth are indivisible and one. . . . The difference between content, or experience, and achieved content, or art, is technique. . . . For technique is the means by which the writer's experience, which is his subject matter, compels him to attend to it."

Professor Schorer's language may be imprecise, but I wish only to point out the pattern of his thinking. It is reducible, I think, to "What you say is inseparable from the language in which you say it." The critic is concerned with the *howness* of poetry rather than the *whatness;* he hopes that in exploring the howness of a poem he will discover the whatness. He cannot do so by discussing fragments of the poem which look like ordinary language, and, in the old way, saying whether he finds them "true" or "beautiful" or "appealing." This pattern of thinking about the relation of data to the language which organizes the data is, in the terminology of philosophy, "monistic."

The next pattern is the acceptance of

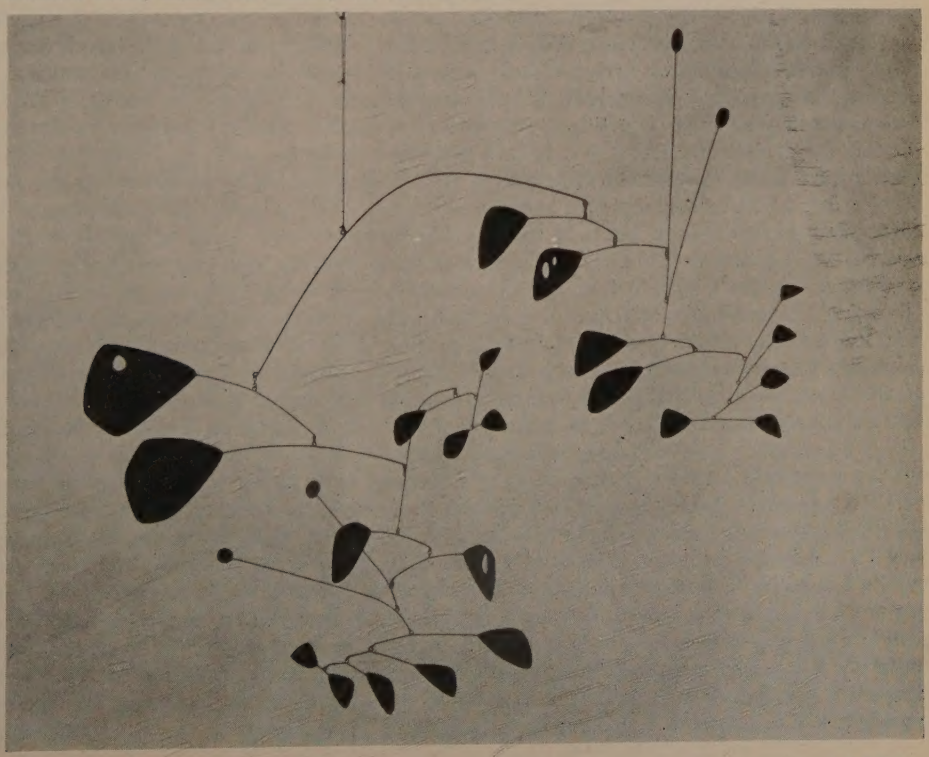
change and the assumption of growth. For Richard von Mises, the logical positivist, "The relation between a linguistic expression and outside experience changes continuously with time and is modified by *every* use of the expression." And "Progress in scientific knowledge is possible only if it is accompanied by a critical and conscious attempt at the improvement of language." (I think "if it is accompanied" should be omitted from this sentence.) If in the first sentence you substitute "artistic" for "linguistic," and in the second, "artistic" for "scientific," the common acceptance of change and growth by modern philosopher and artist becomes clear. The best modern poets have, I think, a better comprehension of poetic structure than their predecessors did: *The Waste Land* is shorter than *Paradise Lost* partly because it has far fewer "editorial statements," far less "ordinary language"; in the same way the incomparable Eastgate Apartment House in Cambridge, Mass., is better than any preceding apartment building because it says more about the problem of maintaining and enjoying life and says it more economically. For Richard von Mises, too, "In the development of art, the continually increasing stock of experience of mankind finds its expression."

Closely related to this pattern is the pattern of uniqueness and diversity. In every poem the modern poet's task is to develop a unique poetic structure; the modern painter's, to develop a unique organization of line and form and color. It is truer than ever that an artist develops his own style; it is even more desirable. No artist can hope to develop all possible styles. One of the reasons I find Matisse greater than Picasso is that though Picasso has had a far greater number of ideas about the ways to organize the structure of a painting, Matisse has refined his particular language with a full and rich economy which makes him unique in the history of art. Almost every painting is a unique step in the process of his unique growth.

Both of these modern characteristics—the insistence that an artist have a unique style, and that each of his works mark a unique stage in his development, are demonstrations of the value of uniqueness and diversity. Modern art is like the sciences. Von Mises says, "The inadequacy of ordinary language leads to the branching off of special scientific languages, resting upon conventions within small groups of people, but reaching across national boundaries."

The final pattern is imperfection conceived as a good. It is equally obvious in the painter's abandonment of the traditional value of "finish" and in the modern "fragmented" poem. If we put the idea in somewhat different terms, we can see how it operates in the other arts as well as in philosophy. To the linguistic philosopher no problem

Alexander Calder, Sumac, 1951, courtesy Curt Valentin Gallery



John Constable, Spring Plowing, 1808, oil sketch, Victoria and Albert Museum, London

is ever solved; when we think we have solved a problem, we have either restated it or have made it part of a more inclusive problem. Put in another way: All solutions are temporary. (It appears to me that Ayer exhibits this pattern of thought when he abandons "strong" or "conclusive" verifiability in favor of "weak" verifiability.) Matisse's method is exactly along these lines and indicates the relation of imperfection to growth. He sketched and resketched the designs for the murals at the Chapel at Vence; only when he felt the moment of fulfilment arrive did he paint the designs on the tiles themselves. And when an artist contemplates the objectified moment of fulfilment, he at once realizes the existence of problems which he had not before imagined.

Imperfection appears also in musical structure. Vaughan Williams' Sixth Symphony has no *heard* final cadence; it simply disappears. In sculpture, Calder's mobiles are a continuously changing, three-dimensional pattern, symbolizing accident and the continuous stream of possibility; each moment of sculptural design is important not in itself but because it has come from a previous one and is about to lead to a subsequent one.

In these four characteristic patterns of modern thought and modern art—linguistic or stylistic monism, change and growth, uniqueness and diversity, and imperfection—one can describe and demonstrate the lateral continuity of modern art and modern linguistic philosophy. I would not for a moment suggest that they are, as values, "metaphysically true." I do not mean that I agree with Ayer that metaphysical propositions are nonsense; rather I feel that they are not what the metaphysicians say they are, propositions about the nature of the universe. They are, I think, linguistically unorganized sentences which refer not to sensory data but to the patterns of the consciousness. It is in this sense that I call these four characteristics of modern art and philosophy patterns of the truly modern consciousness. There are, of course, others, but these I feel to be the central ones, and they are enough to consider here. The question is: Where did they come from? I believe them to be the patterns of romanticism, fully worked out, freed from metaphysics and fully emergent in the twentieth century.

In a recent article (*PMLA—Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, March, 1951), I have set forth my concept of romanticism, derived from Arthur O. Lovejoy's *The Great Chain of Being*. I have tried to point out why and how the patterns of eighteenth-century philosophy and art were abandoned by a few culturally significant figures: Blake, Wordsworth and Coleridge were the first in England; Goethe and Fichte, among others, in Germany. France and America lagged behind for a few decades. At first these men, rejecting eighteenth-century notions, lost all meaningful connection with either the universe or society. This step, of which Byron before *Don Juan* is the richest example in England, I have called negative romanticism, to distinguish it from the new affirmations which were arrived at more or less independently by small but eventually interlocking groups all over Europe and America. The values of the older way of thinking, which had had to be abandoned, were exactly opposite to the new ones. Mechanism versus organicism; stability, or staticism, versus change and growth; uniformity and conformity

versus uniqueness and diversity; perfection versus imperfection; form and content versus form-content; closed artistic forms versus open forms. The older philosophy thought of the universe as something made, into which man had to fit himself; if he thought he found faults in the divinely made machine he was mistaken. His model for the universe was some tool or instrument or machine that man had made. He conceived the universe as radically different from his soul but like his body, which he thought of as a machine perfectly adapted, if he used it correctly, to its environment.

But when the positive romantics took the tree as their model—living, growing, changing, various, imperfect—they found a continuity between soul and body, between themselves, body and soul, and the universe, and between themselves and society, which they thought of not in the manner of Rousseau, as a machine that was working badly, but as an organism that was constantly changing in the direction of slowly increasing integration and accumulating possibilities for individual diversity. Thus Wordsworth could say that reality is something that we "both half create and half perceive," while Carlyle could say that through symbols or "clothes" man is constantly creating reality. At first the positive romanticist thought of God in the old manner—behind the universe of changing phenomena, Himself changeless; later he thought of God as Himself changing. Still later, as the full implications of romanticism came to be worked out in modern empiricism and phenomenalism, the fully emergent romantic abandoned the concept of God entirely.

In art, parallel developments were under way. In his preface to the *Lyrical Ballads,* Wordsworth stated that style redeems the vulgarity of subject matter. He conceived the poem as an emergent in the universe. This is the break with subject matter as the object of the poet, and one of the first steps towards linguistic structure as the concern of the poet. Constable, inspired I believe by Wordsworth, practically created modern painting by abandoning, as he put it, "the plausible argument that *subject* makes the picture." Coleridge posed the problem in more general terms when he talked about the reconciliation of opposites. Towards the end of the nineteenth century there was a whole group of reconciliations of opposites: mind and body, flesh and spirit, materialism and idealism, space and time, matter and energy, subject and form, were resolved into single concepts. At first this tendency took a form of metaphysical monism, but among the modern philosophers of language it took the form I have already discussed: "What you say is inseparable from how you say it." What I wish to point out is the continuity of the pattern of thinking, in spite of the fact that the empiricist and the phenomenalist have abandoned the metaphysics in which positive romanticism was first expressed.

A passage from Pater's *School of Giorgione* (1877) is typical:

"It is the art of music which most completely realises this artistic ideal, this perfect identification of matter and form. In its consummate moments, the end is not distinct from the means, the form from the matter, the subject from the expression; they inhere in and completely saturate each other, and to it, therefore, to the condition of its perfect moments, all the arts may be supposed constantly to tend and aspire. In music, then, rather than in poetry is to be found the true type or measure of perfected art."

Compare Mark Schorer, quoted above.

This "monistic" pattern is the first to be derived from the tree metaphor. Organicism—the idea, roughly, that the whole is other than the sum of its parts, and that the parts exist only because they are part of a whole—is the characteristic metaphysic of the nineteenth century; and even with the abandonment of metaphysics, the modern linguistic philosopher continues to use the pattern in his "linguistic monism," or inseparability of linguistic structure and sensory data. In *The Ancient Mariner* and in *Kubla Khan* Coleridge created in the course of a few months in 1797 and 1798 modern symbolism and modern mythism, in which what is said can be determined only by examination of how it is said.

The acceptance of change and the insistence upon growth is again a characteristic of the first stages of romanticism as well as of modern art. The theme of growth and developing integration through the acceptance of change dominates the century from Wordsworth's *Prelude* through Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus, Moby Dick, Ulysses,* to *The Waste Land,* which also describes the movement from despair to affirmation, death to rebirth.

In painting, growth is expressed in the unique moment. From Constable to the impressionists, there is a continually greater emphasis on the moment. The impressionists perfected a technique of capturing the moment of appearance of some spot in nature, describing the quality in nature that is most subject to change—light. It is only a step to Cézanne, who describes the moment of response to nature, rather than nature's moment; and another step to modern abstract art, which describes and develops the forms of response to visual sensation without reference to the recognizable or "public" qualities of the appearances of nature. And the emergence of Cézanne's style coincides with the emergence of linguistic empiricism and phenomenalism in terms of the romantic patterns.

Diversity and uniqueness appear at the very beginning of the positive romantic development. Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley and Keats are concerned not with perfecting their mastery

Architects Collaborative, Harvard Graduate Center, Cambridge, Mass., 1950, photograph Robert Damora, courtesy Magazine of Building

Robert B. O'Connor and Walter H. Kilham, Jr., Harvey S. Firestone Memorial Library, Princeton University, 1948

of the neo-classic styles and genres, but rather with the development of their own unique styles and poetic structures. This tendency is so universal throughout the nineteenth century and our own that it is hardly necessary even to name names. Wagner, Van Gogh, Frank Lloyd Wright are enough to suggest hundreds more. Today we first test an artist by his uniqueness alone, before we make further critical investigations. From this point of view the extreme diversity of modern art is not, as the traditionalist feels, a sign of cultural disintegration and artistic decadence. On the contrary, as George Boas has pointed out in "Civilization and Routine" (MAGAZINE OF ART, May, 1952), it shows the healthy creativeness of the twentieth century. In 1859 John Stuart Mill quoted Wilhelm von Humboldt in the epigraph for his great *On Liberty*:

"The grand, leading principle, towards which every argument unfolded in these pages directly converges, is the absolute and essential importance of human development in its richest diversity."

The last of the four patterns of thinking is imperfection. It appears in the texture of *The Prelude*, with its variation of esthetic surface. It lies at the center of Browning's thought and style. In *Paracelsus* (1835) the protagonist comes to the realization that the perfect is dead, while the imperfect is living and can continue to grow only because it is imperfect. In *Sordello* there are several statements that no problem is ever solved. "Ends accomplished turn means," he says in Book IV—the same point that Pater was to make in a larger frame of reference. Likewise, controlled spontaneity and deliberate lack of finish characterize modern painting from Constable to Pollock. It was the accusation hurled by Ruskin at Whistler, although, oddly enough, Ruskin created the theory of impressionism in the first volume of *Modern Painters* as early as 1843.

These few examples must suffice. I hope that I have indicated the general consistency of the four ideas I have examined and their original unity in the organic metaphor of a tree, or, more profoundly, of man himself. If my argument is accepted, I think it can be said truly that modern art is not a break from romanticism but the triumph of romanticism. There is only one further point I would make in order to indicate the continuity of the tradition, a point which brings us back to where we started: the alienation of the modern artist from the general public and from the traditionalist.

From the beginning the romanticist was conscious of the fact that he was not understood by even the cultured public. This split seems now acute because of the stylistic adventurousness of the modern artist, but it is nothing new. The Ancient Mariner, compelled to tell his story, drags a wedding guest from one of the basic rituals of social integration; and *Kubla Khan* ends with the theme of the alienated poet:

Beware! Beware!
His flashing eyes, his floating hair:
Weave a circle round him thrice,
And close your eyes with holy dread,
For he on honey-dew hath fed,
And drunk the milk of Paradise.

The public and the modern artist feel uncomfortable with each other because the values of the public are non-romantic. In personality development most people expect change and growth up to late adolescence, or perhaps to marriage; after that the individual is supposed to devote himself to carrying out values already acquired. The romanticist, however, feels that the organization of a situation in terms of his values changes the situation and also changes the structure of the values. The contrast can be seen clearly in the double sense of the word "adjustment." Although some psychologists mean by this word the capacity of the individual to make continuous and continuously richer adjustments to experience, most people consider the adjustment as the movement towards and away from, and again towards, the same values of stability.

Hence in matters of art, the naïve "know what they like." They seek a continual confirmation of their esthetic taste, rather than a continuous revaluation of it. Consequently, compromise is impossible; the positions are too widely divergent. In the nineteenth century, the public could imagine it understood the best romantic art. It could think of *The Ancient Mariner* as a ballad about the supernatural, and, with a little time, it could accept impressionism as a new and rather nice way of painting pretty landscapes. With the final freeing of romanticism in the deliberate development of language or style, the general public, with its naïve concept of language and its limitation of style to recognizable imitation or familiar harmonization, must now either reject the modern artist or make the strenuous effort necessary to catch up with him. Few people, though their numbers are growing, are willing to make the effort.

The horizontal split in our culture, therefore, is not an historical accident, nor is it something new in the twentieth century. It has existed for over one hundred and fifty years; any attempts to bring the two parts together into a cultural integration must fail or it must destroy art, as the Russians have nearly succeeded in doing. The sorry attempts of the socially minded 'thirties to do so were almost disastrous to the course of modern art. The triumph of romanticism in the twentieth century has been the greatest step towards the freeing of man's consciousness from its own symbols since the renaissance. If people are frightened by it, their reaction is understandable. No one ever said that freedom is easy.

DELACROIX AND PHOTOGRAPHY

Beaumont Newhall

Note: *The editors wish to thank Mr. James Thrall Soby for selecting the photographs from the Durieu album here reproduced and for writing the accompanying comments.*

THE romantic attitude towards photography is well summed up by its chief critic, Charles Baudelaire. In his *Salon* of 1859 he called photography "the refuge of all would-be painters, too poorly gifted or too lazy to finish their studies," blamed on it "the impoverishment of French artistic genius," and predicted that if it "is allowed to supplement art in some of its functions, it will supplant it or completely corrupt it."

Yet one of the artists whom Baudelaire most admired, Eugène Delacroix, found photographs to be "treasures for an artist," and regretted that "such a wonderful invention arrived so late." Delacroix not only drew from photographs, but he posed models for the camera and was a charter member of the French Photographic Society.

Delacroix first mentioned photography in his *Journal* on May 7th, 1847. He criticized a statue by one Clésinger as "a daguerreotype in sculpture, except for the treatment of the marble, which is very able." This negative approach was replaced, in his 1850 essay on art instruction, by advice to the student to study photographs. A daguerreotype, he wrote, "is the mirror of the object, certain details almost always overlooked in drawing from nature take in it great characteristic importance, and thus introduce the artist to the complete knowledge of construction; light and shadows are found in their true character, that is to say with the exact degree of strength or softness, a very delicate distinction without which there is no depth of space. However it should not be lost sight of that the daguerreotype should be considered only as a translator entrusted to initiate us further into the secrets of nature . . . a kind of dictionary."

He began to collect photographs. On February 2nd, 1853, he thanked someone (the name does not appear on the letter, which is now in the George Eastman House) "for the splendid photographic prints which I prize so highly. These beautiful examples are treasures for the artist."

His good friend Constant Dutilleux was an accomplished photographer as well as painter, and Delacroix wrote him on March 7th, 1854: "How I regret that such a wonderful invention arrived so late, I mean as far as I am concerned! The possibility of studying such results would have had an influence on me which I can only imagine by the usefulness which they still have for me, even with the little time that I can give to serious study; they are palpable demonstrations of drawing from nature, of which we have hitherto had only very imperfect ideas." Dutilleux said, in a note first published by Raymond Escholier in the third volume of his biography, "Delacroix not only admired photographs theoretically, he drew a good deal from daguerreotypes and paper prints. I own an album of models, men and women, posed by him, seized by the lens under his eyes. . . . Incredible phenomenon! Choice of type, attitude, distribution of light and shade, twist of limb, are all so personal, so requisite, that one would say of many of these prints that they were taken from the originals of the master. The artist was in a measure sovereign master of the machine and of the material. The radiance of the ideal he carried with him transformed models at three francs a session into vanquished heroes and dreamers, nervous and panting nymphs."

An album of one hundred and fifteen photographs by Eugène Durieu in the photographic collection of the George Eastman House corresponds almost exactly to this description. Durieu, a friend of Delacroix's, was Directeur

Général des Cultes, and an amateur photographer. He was president of the Société Française de Photographie from 1855 to 1857, and was particularly well known for his excellent reproductions of drawings and prints. The album contains facsimiles of etchings by Rembrandt and of drawings by Watteau and Boucher, in which the very color of the ink and the red chalk is reproduced. Durieu did not believe in retouching, and an article in the *Bulletin* of the Society is one of the earliest pronouncements of the doctrine of the "straight" photograph. To make his point he drew an unusual comparison. A certain opera was written for a singer who could not reach high notes; the composer made up for her deficiency by scoring a clarinet to come to her aid at critical moments. The deception passed unnoticed on first hearing but, once known, it prejudiced the entire opera. Retouching a photograph, Durieu held, was in the same category.

Most of the figure studies in the Eastman House album are reminiscent of the style not only of Delacroix, but also of Ingres, Corot and Courbet. Many are in the langorous pose known as "odalisque"; a few are fully dressed in oriental costumes not dissimilar to those worn by the *Algériennes* of Delacroix. With few exceptions, Durieu's photographs have little independent value, but they enable us to visualize the kind of photographs which interested Delacroix.

After dinner on Saturday, May 21st, 1853, we learn from his *Journal*, Delacroix showed two friends "photographs which I owe to the kindness of Durieu. I made them try the experiment which I had made myself, without thinking of it, two days before: which is to say that after having examined these photographs of nude models, some of them poorly built, overdeveloped in places and producing a rather disagreeable effect, I displayed some engravings by Marcantonio. We had a feeling of repulsion, almost of disgust, at their incorrectness, their mannerism, and their lack of naturalness; and we felt these things despite the virtue of style; it is the only one to be admired in that artist, but we were not admiring it at that moment. As a matter of fact, let a man of genius make use of the daguerreotype as it should be used, and he will raise himself to a height that we do not know. . . . Down to the present this machine-art has rendered us only a detestable service; it spoils masterpieces for us, without completely satisfying us."

A few months later he wrote in his diary (October 15th, 1853): "The conversation turned on painting with olive oil. If that invention had been made thirty years ago, as also that of the daguerreotype, my career might perhaps have been more completely filled out. The facility of painting at every moment without having to bother about the palette, and then the instruction that the daguerreotype affords to a man who paints from memory are inestimable advantages."

Camille Corot, Italian Woman, c. 1870, 32¼ x 26", collection Edward G. Robinson, Beverly Hills, Calif.

STYLISTIC PARALLELS *between nineteenth-century painting and photography are often close, ranging from the posed figure pieces of the romantic generation to the evolution of instantaneous photography and the snapshot compositions of* DEGAS. *This photograph, for example, reminds one of* COROT *at his best, and probably was inspired in part by that master's humble opulence, particularly as to texture and light.*

On November 11th, photographs taken by Durieu and a friend again came up in the conversation. Riesener, all atremble *("ce n'est qu'en tremblant")* asked if he could, without indiscretion and without being accused of plagiarism, use their photographs to make paintings. Delacroix spent all day at Durieu's on June 18th, 1854, from eight until five: "We did nothing but pose. Thévelin made as many sketches as Durieu made prints: a minute or a minute and a half at most for each." This suggests that they worked from models. He took Durieu's photographs to Dieppe (July 30th, 1854), and made drawings from them (August 24th). On October 22nd: "Worked a little at the *Odalisque* I am doing from the daguerreotype, but without much enthusiasm."

We have not been able to find among the surviving works of Delacroix any drawings made from these photographs of Durieu—if indeed the Eastman House album contains the same photographs which he used. But in view of Delacroix's insistence upon using photographs "as a kind of dictionary," it is unlikely that any drawings inspired by them would be slavish copies. For with the power of his genius he would transform them, just as he transformed anything that stimulated his vision and quickened his imagination.

Note: *All quotations from Delacroix's* Journal *are from Walter Pach's translation (New York, Covici Friede, 1937) and are used by Mr. Pach's permission.*

Eugène Delacroix*, Algerian Women in the Harem, *detail, 1834, oil, Louvre, Paris, photograph Giraudon

LONG BEFORE *his famed trip to Morocco in 1832,* DELACROIX *had been fascinated by oriental costumes, weapons and bric-a-brac and had studied them avidly in the homes of collector-friends. A photograph such as this, whether or not* DELACROIX *ever saw it, summarizes to some extent his love of sumptuous detail and his complex use of exotic accessory. The model's languorous pose typifies the decorative aspect of the painter's orientalism, in sharp contrast to the romantic turbulence of pictures like* The Convulsionaries of Tangiers.

Auguste Renoir, After the Bath, 1888, oil, 45½ x 35½", collection Georg Reinhart, Winterthur, photograph Schwitter A.-G., courtesy Harry N. Abrams, Inc.

Emil Nolde, Eve, 1910, oil, 41 x 16", private collection, Frankfurt a.-M.

fact that the palpable charms of the flesh-and-blood model, as well as the artist's vision of ideal feminine beauty, are as Berenson says, "the result of thousands of years of conscious and unconscious effort." The nakedness of woman may be the work of God, but much of the allure of that nakedness is the result of human culture.

The classical poise and equilibrium exemplified by Renoir's nudes is often replaced by a medieval rigidity in the naked men and women of the expressionists. Nolde's *Eve* is a tall, gawky adolescent of gothic slimness and elongation of limb. Posed in strict frontality, she stands immobile, her sticklike arms hanging limply at her sides, and stares out at us from the tall, narrow frame of the picture with large, uncomprehending eyes. As in much medieval painting, there is a jarring lack of coordination between the body's predominant symmetry and one or two deviations from it. The figure is placed noticeably to the right of center, and both feet turn in the same direction, so that in spite of the fact that the girl stands motionless, her legs if viewed separately would appear to be walking out of the picture.

In contrast to the "cute" auburn bangs that fall casually over the forehead of Renoir's bather, a long, serpentine strand of black hair falls over Eve's right shoulder and breast. The body, awkward in pose and proportions, is painted in deliberately sloppy brush strokes that give the flesh a chalky texture. Instead of the glowing body surface of a Renoir nude, Eve's skin looks like wet plaster of Paris. Finally, the background of Nolde's painting with its chaotic brush smearings suggests a dank, inhospitable jungle—very different

Karl Schmidt-Rottluff,
Naked Figures in the Open Air,
1913, oil
(from von Sydow,
Die deutsche expressionistische Kultur und Malerei, Berlin, 1920)

from the sensuous blend of rich color and dappling impressionist brush strokes which in Renoir's *After the Bath* give the illusion of a natural backdrop of water, reeds and foliage.

Another expressionist image of nakedness within a raw and uncomfortable nature setting, but without the obvious religio-psychological overtones of *Eve,* is Schmidt-Rottluff's *Naked Figures in the Open Air.* Two bare female figures stand within a primeval dream-world of exploding surf and splintered rocks. As in Nolde's canvas, there is a deliberate crudity of figures and landscape. But where in *Eve* the clear separation of figure from ground (visually, if not symbolically) tends to suggest tension between the psychic and the physical, the contrast between human and non-human elements in the Schmidt-Rottluff is reduced to a minimum. Far from appearing out of place among the jagged, broken shapes that surround them, his faceless, angular figures seem never to have known any other habitat. Locale and women alike are wild and unkempt. The postures of the figures as they wash themselves are awkward, their silhouettes ungainly. These are the offspring of a pagan South Seas mother and a medieval Christian father. Schmidt-Rottluff's strong, sensuous color is oddly at variance with his ascetic taste for rugged, fractured forms.

Max Pechstein, an expressionist who actually did travel to the South Seas, attempted to depict primitive peoples in the exotic manner of Gauguin. But the rigorous stylization of many of his compositions imposes upon the limbs of his "happy savages" an artificial conformity to a pictorial system of verticals, horizontals and diagonals. Instead of the idyllic mood of almost vegetable reverie induced by Gauguin's curvilinear *art nouveau* patterns, we find a jazzy decorativeness and stylish sophistication that would be well suited to the walls of a modern night club or as décor for a musical comedy. The modish loincloths of some of Pechstein's Palau Islanders bear a remarkable resemblance to those worn by cabaret chorus girls.

Interestingly enough, these South Sea folk seem less close to nature than the Baltic fishermen whom Pechstein often represented in heroic combat with a hostile sea. In *Figures at the Seashore,* where the shore is a European one and the figures modern Germans, two naked girls are seen exercising vigorously on a narrow strip of sand before the high-piled waves of the cold northern ocean. They are painted in what seems an intentionally amateurish fashion, with a brutal oversimplification and directness that creates a powerful, barbaric effect. Against the onrushing tumult of water the naked pair becomes the incarnation of dynamic physical vitality.

The concern of many expressionist painters with the cult of primitive vitality—worship of the body, sunbathing and outdoor gymnastics—is in part an inheritance from the immediately preceding phase of German culture. Around the turn of the century there was a widespread opinion among educated Germans that the school system was overintellectualizing the young and offering them too little opportunity for bodily exercise. The sudden appearance of innumerable naked figures in German paintings, drawings and prints of the late nineteenth century illustrates the new tendency to glorify man's physical side. Lovis Corinth, the outstanding representative of a school of painting called "*erotischer Nacktkultus*" painted robust female nudes in a style that combined Rubensian

eroticism with Teutonic gruffness. Unlike Corinth, however, the expressionists no longer find vitality merely within the human being as such; they feel constrained to expose him to the vitalizing cosmic force of "nature" (meaning Darwinian nature, that mysterious universal force called variously *Wille zur Macht* or *élan vital*).

The expressionist view of man's relation to nature is well illustrated by Franz Marc's *Herdsmen* of 1912. Upon a crystalline configuration of rock are the naked forms of two sleeping men, one sitting with legs drawn up, the other stretched out at full length. Instead of tending their animals, they are watched over by them; but the animals themselves, though seemingly on guard, are also asleep. An Egyptian stillness reigns, which seems in danger of dissolving violently at any moment, for the Z-shaped composition, though solidly anchored to the frame, is breathtakingly taut. The muscular bodies of the two men are as roughhewn as if cut from granite, their joints as rigid and inflexible as armor plate. But close to nature they indubitably are. The same fatal animism broods in rocks, animals and humans alike. The total effect is that of a dream within a dream and is at the same time totally disquieting.

Marc's explosive landscapes, pregnant with a vision of Dionysiac renewal, are the pictorial analogues of Nietzsche's statement in *The Will to Power:* "We would like to recover the pristine purity of the stream of becoming." This yearning for a deeper emotional bond with the wellsprings of nature took several dramatic forms in Germany early in the twentieth century, the most important being the youth movement (*Jugendbewegung*) and nudism (*Nacktkultur*).

The origin of the youth movement may be traced to the *Wandervögel* hiking clubs that were spontaneously organized by German schoolboys and undergraduates in the closing years of the last century. Impelled by a strong reaction against the materialism and mechanization of life under Kaiser Wilhelm II, and a longing to escape the claustrophobic atmosphere of Prussian efficiency that was transforming the country with uncomfortable haste into the foremost industrial nation of Europe, the "Birds of Passage" or "Wanderers" took to the open countryside whenever opportunity afforded. They sought to oppose the trend towards urbanization through weekend excursions into the rural out-of-doors, where among the peasants they might rediscover "the sources of German national strength." The young reformers were buoyed up by a romantic idealism with vague but strong convictions of an essentially religious nature. Pagan as well as medieval Christian sources were drawn upon, and there was a revival of such celebrations as the *Sonnwend Feier*—an ancient German festival of the sun, commemorated with singing and dancing around an open bonfire.

Precisely these sentiments of "Dionysiac-drunken" pantheism and primitivistic idealism are apparent in the animal paintings of Franz Marc. In an appreciation of this artist written at the time of his first one-man show in America, Robert Goldwater wrote that Marc "wished especially to interpret the animal world because it was above all in beasts that he found those qualities he felt lacking in men and in himself: harmony within their own beings, a group cooperation unquestionably accepted and harmoniously carried out, and a successful submission and adaptation to the laws of nature. Because man struggled (with himself, with others, with the world), and the beasts did not, he was 'ugly' and they were 'pure.'" This analysis points up not only the romantic and programmatic attitude of Marc towards nature—which is representative of the expressionists as a group—but suggests as well the anxiety which they felt about their state of existence in the confusing and frustrating milieu of pre-war Germany.

In its earlier phase, at any rate, the youth movement was primarily a revolt against the too rapid mechanization and urbanization of German economy and the too strict and confining discipline of German officialdom. The *Wandervögel* rejected science and reason, asserting these forces to be at the service of governmental, industrial and educational authority. Nudism, on the other hand, though essentially emotional, often claimed the backing of medical science. Adolf Koch, the founder of an educational organization for teaching and publicizing nudist health techniques, gave three sources for the German free physical culture movement (*Freikörperkultur*): the beauty movement (*Schönheitsbewegung*), the natural healing movement (*Naturheilbewegung*) and the youth movement (*Jugendbewegung*), each of which originated around the turn of the century. Thus dress reform, medical reform and spiritual reform are all ingredients in the faith of the *Lichtfreunde*, who advocated "health, beauty and purity through nudity and light." Nudism and the youth movement, both oriented about the wish for physical and spiritual "regeneration," are in many respects complementary. Appropriate to both is the myth of sun-worship, which, it may be worth noting, is an important element in Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra.*

The same peculiar blend of regressive primitivism and futuristic modernism is evident in the outdoor paintings of the expressionists Erich Heckel and Ernst Ludwig Kirchner. At times both artists seem directly inspired by an intimate acquaintance with the theory and practice of nudism. Kirchner's *Naked Pair in the Sun* (1907) is a relatively objective commentary on two modern gymnosophists who, having donned their "clothes of light" are enjoying a sunbath together in an open clearing surrounded by woods. The woman, brown as a walnut, seems thoroughly in her element and smiles broadly to herself in evident satisfaction. In striking contrast, her male companion—an intellectual type with short

Ernst Ludwig Kirchner,
Naked Pair in the Sun,
1907, oil, 33½ x 37½"
(from Grohmann,
Das Werk
Ernst Ludwig Kirchners,
Munich, 1926)

cropped hair and a goatee—is as white as an undercooked pie and, though game, looks none too comfortable.

A more typical treatment of the subject may be seen in Heckel's watercolor, *Bathers at the Cove* (1913), which depicts two female nudists exercising and resting on a strip of beach bordering a glassy smooth surface of water. The washes of color, applied in broad rectangular swaths, create a brittle, broken-glass effect somewhat like John Marin's watercolors but with more violence of directional and tonal contrasts. The result is a cold, exhilarating "planar" transparency that imparts an almost concrete palpability to the thin, shimmering ambient of light and air. One's flesh tingles empathically at the thought of bathing naked in such annihilating gulfs of sharp, raw brightness.

An equally hedonistic but more knowing and bohemian view of nudism is vividly expressed in a number of Kirchner's landscapes with figures. The two figures in *Naked Girls on the Shore* (1912) seem joyful by comparison with those of Schmidt-Rottluff and Nolde, though in their own way equally stiff and unnatural. Kirchner's unclad figures invariably look like marionettes with their limbs so fastened as to allow only the crudest of movements. But if they appear wooden and archaic, they also seem modern and sophisticated. Their hair is dressed in the latest fashion, their faces are modishly blank and their postures bold and blasé. Oddly, Kirchner is most "modern" when he is most medieval.

The landscape of sand dunes and scrub pine in *Naked Girls on the Shore* suggests the Baltic Sea region. The girls' bare bodies, painted in flaming red, are silhouetted against the bright purplish-pink of a sand bank. As in Schmidt-Rottluff's *Naked Figures in the Open Air*, the girl in the middle distance is visible only down to the knees. A bush obscures her lower legs; only through this sort of overlapping can she be made to appear standing *within* the landscape, for there is no ground plane nor any clear separation of near, far and intermediate space. The foreground figure, who stands amid erupting clumps of grass and vigorously blooming flowers, extends one leg as though to take a step, but her arms hang straight down at her sides as rigidly as do those of Nolde's *Eve*. Instead of convincing space or movement, it is shockingly vivid color (pink, crimson and green) and a texture of forcefully applied paint which dominate the canvas.

One of Kirchner's most striking inventions is the use of blue in broad bands along the edges of the crimson, naked bodies to produce an effect of the iridescent glare of midsummer sunlight. This impression of an all-encompassing effulgence is augmented by the rich, deep blue of the sky and the strong contrast between the relatively opaque green of the foliage and the shimmering, transparent pink of the hot sand. Another significant aspect of the device of outlining the red figures with ribbons of blue is that it calls attention to the body's sensitive periphery. The relevance of this to the psychosomatic rationale of German

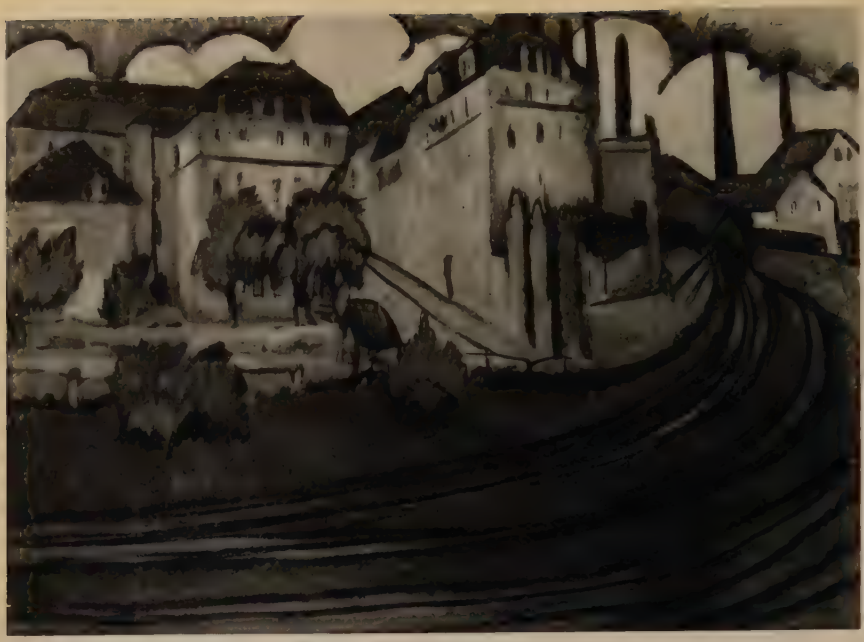
sunbathing is apparent in Stephen Spender's remarks on the German atmosphere of the 'twenties, in his autobiographical *World Within World:* "The sun healed their bodies, made them conscious of the independent life of the surface of the skin, of the quivering muscles underneath, of the transparent blood which showed like red glass against the light, of the eyelashes which held the sky as in prongs; their minds also were filled with an abstraction of a huge circle of fire, an intense whiteness blotting out the sharp lines of all other forms of consciousness, destroying above all the sense of time."

Though Spender is speaking specifically of the young men of the postwar, postinflation period, essentially the same outlook, though not in these narcissistic terms, was held considerably earlier by Germany's intellectual and artistic circles. Even before the tragedy of the war they found their country's militant industrial and commercial expansion out of accord with their cherished dream of a Germany redeemed from bourgeois "liberalism" and "decadence." About 1900 or even earlier the traditionally religious-minded as well as the iconoclast bohemians among German writers yearned for the advent of the "New Man," whose coming would usher in a "new Dionysian age" and a "regenerated Europe." The expressionists were heir to this apocalyptic hope and also, of course, to its psychological origins in the reaction to the restrictions and frustrations of Germany's total urban organization. Their programmatic affirmation of the "new way of life" was complementary to an equally programmatic disavowal of big-city civilization. Retreating into a "cosmic mood," they awaited the fulfilment of the prophecy made by Nietzsche's Zarathustra who, surveying the great city that dominates our culture, pronounced that "the great noontide must be preceded by the consuming of the city in pillars of fire."

Precisely this catastrophe is the subject of many paintings by Ludwig Meidner, produced shortly before the cataclysm of the first World War. His landscapes are visions of horribly doomed cities of noisome messiness, whose degraded inhabitants are little more than twitching bundles of reflexes. In *The City and I* (1913), Meidner's own shipwrecked features are surrounded by the chaotically mushrooming shapes of exploding streets, factories and tenements. The nightmarish background seems to burst like a headache from the artist's agonizingly twisted and fragmented brow.

The expressionists, however, did not always view the city in terms of pure anguish and unmitigated disgust. A more subtle response to it is evident in Kirchner's *Railroad Entering Town.* No smoke issues from the cluster of industrial smokestacks, and the rail tracks are devoid of traffic. The architecture arises, as insubstantial as that of a city in a fairy tale, against a daydreamy sky full of billowing clouds whose pale lemon-yellow hue counterbalances and relieves the predominant green-violet tonality of the total picture. Kirchner gives us here the disturbing multiple aspect of the metropolis as apprehended by the free-lancing man of sensibility. It is at once the focus of ambi-

Ludwig Meidner, Earthquake, 1913, oil, collection J. B. Neumann, New York



Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Railroad Entering Town, c. 1916, oil, 35 x 47", Van Diemen-Lilienfeld Galleries

tion and hope for worldly success, the grand town which basks impersonally in the bright air of a clear, cool afternoon, and the anonymous, environmental world which cannot possibly take note of the artist as it is taken note of by him. The city is to the artist an object of unrequited love. There is all the delicious listlessness and mild foreboding of an ill-fated and impossible love affair, the pathos of the situation lying precisely in the impossibility that the relationship can ever be anything but one-sided. The railroad is a still more ambivalent symbol of escape, permitting one to flee either towards the city or away from it. The irony lies in the fact that the railroad always terminates in a town not greatly different from other towns; the "escape" is always from one anonymous environment to another. In Kirchner's painting, the railroad enters the city rather abruptly and through a tunnel. The tunnel leads to the intimate heart of the town, but we, as spectators sharing the artist's vantage point, are left hovering outside in a completely marginal position.

The city as seen from within is treated from equally varied points of view, all however reflecting a sense of tension and human isolation. Erich Waske's *Street at Night* is a dynamic pattern of radiating and crisscrossing lights and shadows. Vague human shapes wait beneath the heavy gothic façade of a large store, while an endless procession of phantom streetcars advances down a street that extends to infinity. The immaterial "substance" to which all things are subordinate is the electric glare of the overhead street lamps; they cast wedges of shadow in all directions, so that light contends sharply with light, and shadow with shadow.

Max Beckmann and George Grosz present the city in less equivocal terms as a sordid jungle and a horror. In Grosz's *Germany, A Winter's Tale,* a skilful quasi-collage technique is employed to produce a hallucinatory impression of violence and confusion. Interwoven with the kaleidoscopic architecture are bestial, hypocritical faces and lustful mirages of naked female torsos. Beckmann's *Night* expresses the city man's sufferings in a scene of actual physical torture. A jumble of twisted, stretched and compressed human forms crowd the canvas. A brutal, nonsensical orgy of deliberate sadism is shown taking place in a cellar-like room. A blaring gramophone trumpet and an open flame add further to the violence. The total effect is one of coenesthetic delirium.

Kirchner's attitude towards the city was relatively more temperate. In bohemian fashion he sought to adjust to it by surrounding himself with a protective wall of kindred spirits and by cultivating a life of the senses. Yet his hedonism is far removed from that of the completely poised Matisse, to whom he bears a superficial resemblance. The lonely celebrants in *Indoor Bacchanalia* (1908) are shown dispersed through several different rooms. Similarly, the figures in *Modern Bohemia* (1924) resemble figures in a carpet and are rigorously subordinated to a decorative pattern. Little individual autonomy is permitted, and interpersonal contact is altogether lacking. It is revealing to compare the naked girl on the divan with Manet's *Olympia.* The latter reclines on her bed with the businesslike composure of a professional courtesan who is well aware of the prerogatives and obligations of her status. Kirchner's young woman, on the other hand, is an amateur,

Ernst Ludwig Kirchner,
Modern Bohemia,
1924, oil, 50 x 66",
Curt Valentin Gallery

George Grosz,
Germany, A Winter's Tale,
1918, oil,
von Garvens collection, Hannover
(From Einstein,
Die Kunst des 20. Jahrhunderts,
Berlin, 1928)

Max Beckmann, The Argonauts, left side panel, 1950, oil, 74½ x 33″, Curt Valentin Gallery

full of crude bravado, but about as graceful as a square-cornered pretzel.

Kirchner's satirical self-revelations, apparent in his recurrent depictions of the narrow-chested, self-conscious artist type, are rather unusual. By and large the German expressionists, following Nietzsche (and Walt Whitman) preferred to think of themselves not simply as artists, practicing one among a number of specialized professions, but as seers and apostles of life. It is revealing that in *Modern Bohemia*—one of the rare expressionist paintings to deal with the artist *qua* artist—he is shown as an overintellectualized and physically unimpressive person, overshadowed by the dynamic and almost diabolic animus of the naked woman.

The most forthright approach to the theme of the artist and his work is found in the paintings of Max Beckmann. Though preferring not to identify himself with the expressionist movement, paradoxically he did more than any of the German "regulars" to give international scope to the movement and extend its life beyond its official demise in the mid-'twenties. Beckmann originally conceived the left panel of his last triptych, *The Argonauts*, as an independent treatment of the painter and his model. It depicts a grizzled veteran of the palette standing before his canvas as if compelled to work at a soul-trying task. The model, a tightly corseted, full-blown girl, sits bolt upright upon an upturned mask or head and holds a sword towards her employer as if she were in fact his overlord. One feels that the artist's sense of the refractoriness of his materials is bound up with the inner conflict between Beckmann the sensualist and Beckmann the moralistic visionary.

The large central panel of *The Argonauts*, finished the day before Beckmann died, shows two naked boys and an old man at the edge of a dock at twilight. The old man is descending a ladder which vanishes behind the wharf. The figures are epic in their proportions, and the megalographic style of the composition gives it a monumental grandeur. It represents the "classical" moment in the evolution of expressionist style. A mood of finality has settled upon a despairing vision of the world which, looking for wisdom with the *eyes*, attempts to find solace in the *realness of objects*. Beckmann has related that he was warned by William Blake in a vision against hypersubjectivity. " 'Have confidence in objects,' he said, 'do not let yourself be intimidated by the horror of the world. Everything is ordered and correct and must fulfil its destiny in order to attain perfection. Seek this path and you will attain from your own Ego ever deeper perception of the eternal beauty of creation. . . .' "

The Argonauts is a peculiar mixture of classical resolution and expressionistic entanglement, of the heroic in confrontation with the irrational. No one took more seriously than Beckmann the postwar German credo of salvation through "strength, courage and force" in the face of obstacles; yet he was never persuaded to seek his salvation through taking refuge in a collective emotion or an exalted abstraction. With Beckmann, expressionism moves beyond its original primitivistic impulse to a reflective, even philosophic, outlook. Nature and the naked body are no longer evoked as the programmatic symbols of a new Dionysian era; rather, there is a new attempt to define the human. Where the earlier German expressionists looked forward to a revitalized and heroic mankind living under the dynamic sway of cosmic law, Beckmann, more personally resourceful and more truly heroic, sought through *art* to obtain from his "own Ego" greater self-knowledge and mastery of life. The sober view that force and rationality are not necessarily mutually exclusive is evident in his self-reliant figures—figures which reveal a powerful integrity that refuses to be swallowed up by a tyrannical web of outer circumstances, either atmospheric or compositional.

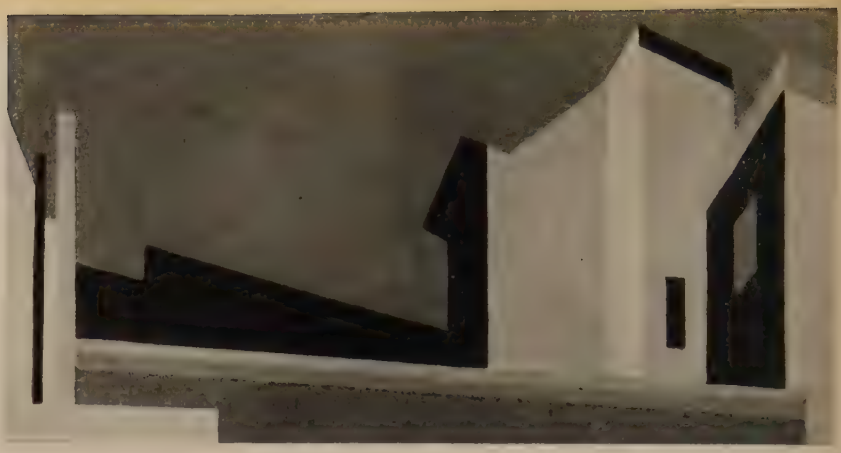
The Two Bridges, 1947, oil, 28 x 45", collection Mr. & Mrs. Roy Neuberger, New York, photo Oliver Baker

NILES SPENCER *by Holger Cahill*

In the death of Niles Spencer on May 15th, 1952, America lost one of the greatest artists of her contemporary period. His death was untimely. He was in the best years of early middle age, and up to the moment of his short last illness there was no slackening in the force and quality of his personal statement as an artist. It might be said that the work of his last years is his best, holding both the promise and the fulfilment of matured and continuing growth.

Niles Spencer had the rare gift of constancy in his life as in his work. It is, perhaps, not amiss to set down a few words about his quality as a man. In many ways he belonged to the world of Henry James; he had the refinement, the courtesy, the reticence, but he differed from most Henry James men in the steady force of his creative talent and in the continuity of his production. His humility would not permit him to speak of his own work or to push it in any way; but he was so secure in it, even when things went badly, that he could afford to be generous in his appreciation of other artists. He was a perfectionist who worked slowly, and so appreciation of his stature has grown slowly. It may be that this has always been the fact. One thinks of Jan Vermeer, whose production appears to have proceeded at a pace similar to that of Spencer, about two pictures a year—a man of the seventeenth century lost out of the history of art until the middle of the nineteenth, when he was rediscovered by Thoré.

As with Vermeer, it is not difficult to place Spencer's work in the exact context of its time, but it is far from easy to trace the links of his progress. His pictures, in idea and in structure, grew on the canvas; their successes and failures and their consummation took place there. The sketches are very few. In esthetic and technique the context of Spencer's art is cubism, but the personal quality, the dignity, the distance and precision are those of the classic. Niles Spencer has been called a precisionist—a convenient tag —but there is too much human warmth in this work to call it precisionist. The precision is not merely in the handling of edges, the definition and separation of forms—though this is done with great clarity—so much as in the articulation and movement of planes and the composition of the picture as a whole. What is defined is a time and a space, the date and place of the urban-industrial society which has written its character upon the face of contemporary America. Spencer reads the urban industrial space of our time as abstract, as particular, even as colloquial, but through an act of awareness and selection he confers upon the particularity of its moment the eternal *now* of art.



City Shapes,
1946, oil, 16 x 30",
collection Arizona State College,
Tempe, Arizona,
courtesy The Downtown Gallery,
photo Oliver Baker

Every esthetic, Juan Gris has said, should bear a date, and every work of art give body to the desire to create a substantial and spiritual world. The shapes of our world appear in a great many different ways to different observers, but it is the artist who must create and refine our consciousness of them and make the record that they bequeath to history. It is the artist who confers upon a scene from the "real" world dumb to consciousness the living order and uniqueness of new creation. For one who has seen and understood Spencer's *Erie Underpass*, the drab segment of the Erie Railroad system which was the point of departure for the painting can never be the same again. It is itself, but it has been invested with an architectural strength, a quiet excitement, an intimacy and a warmth which are the qualities of the artist himself. There is invariably an actual point of departure from the outside world in Spencer's work, but the resulting painting is never merely document. There is always the Embarkation for Cythera, the venture into the

City Walls, 1921
oil, 39⅛ x 28¾",
Museum of Modern Art

interior. The painting is the result of a confrontation between two worlds, what appears without and what is given within. All great art involves this confrontation. Whether the painting is to be concerned entirely with itself as an autonomous object, without responsibility for give and take with any referent outside itself, is a question now being debated in the work of contemporary artists, particularly American artists. Niles Spencer was acutely aware of this debate. Even in his most abstract work, such as the early *Abstract Study,* the painting is always placed in a set of relations with the outside world, although in his published statements he never insisted that the picture must reach beyond the frame into a world of referents considered as "real." The world outside was no more real to him than the world inside. This is clear in his statement in connection with the Realist Exhibition at the Cincinnati Museum in 1941:

"The term, Realist, as it is applied to contemporary painting has acquired a number of contradictory associations. These should be made clear if the aims of present-day artists are to be understood. . . . The deeper meanings of nature can only be captured in painting through discovering form and design. The visual recognizability is actually irrelevant. . . ."

The feeling for form and design, for the basic architecture of the painting, is both sensitive and profound in Spencer's work. The composition is precise and sure. It is a continuum but it is not closed. Spencer never blocks off his space. There is always a movement back and forth, an opening up of the back of the picture without disturbing the integrity of the surface, a suggestion of depth achieved with the greatest simplicity, the window light just off center in the background of the *New Ice Plant,* the light area in the upper left of *Ventilators,* the inclined plane in *Watch Factory,* the "seeing through" to the other side under the arch of the *Two Bridges.* These windows and opening patches of light let air into the strongly constructed continuum, keeping the planes in movement, the here and the beyond lying in one plane as they must in the act of consciousness itself. In the *Two Bridges* the concentration and intensity of the rectilinear design is softened by the arch and the expansive green curve. In these late paintings the space is deeply felt. They are much higher in key than the earlier work, but even where there is a close approach to monochrome, as in *City Walls,* we are in the presence of a colorist who can make use of his medium with a sure discipline. Paint is handled with warmth and feeling, but it is never used for the seductiveness of the pigment itself. There is not much interest in texture, except in some of the early paintings, the still-lifes and a few city scenes like *City Walls* and *Abstract Study* (1922).

Niles Spencer faced the problems of painting squarely and in terms of contemporary vision and technique. His work will remain. It is a symbol and a realization of the substantial and spiritual community of our time and place, bequeathed to his generation and to the future.

Note: *An exhibition of Niles Spencer's late works, from 1948 until his death, will be on view at The Downtown Gallery until November 15th.*

Erie Underpass, 1949, oil, 28 x 36", Metropolitan Museum of Art

Detail of nave interior, Die Wies

DOMINIKUS ZIMMERMANN

S. Lane Faison, Jr.

In one of his most eloquent paragraphs, Sacheverell Sitwell sets the stage for the study of German architecture of the eighteenth century. His words apply with peculiar force to the work of Dominikus Zimmermann:

"These high, pointed hills thickly clad with fir trees, the medieval castle on the summit, the thin air smelling of fir-cone and bonfire, the apple orchard below, the walled gardens hung with apricots, the small apple-green mountain lakes, rye bread, and white wine from the Rhine provinces—these are the substitutes that we must produce for cypress avenues, white oxen and thickly strewn remnants of classical sculpture as they occur in the pictures of every artist who has ever been to Rome. In this more suitable context the German buildings of that day look born to their environment. They have made a brave show of classical descent and protected their claims with a fine flourish of heraldic fable. The Northern and Gothic wilderness has given birth to something that is anxious to make greater claims—as though there were a buried treasure hidden somewhere in the pine woods" (*German Baroque Art*, London, Duckworth, 1928, page 28).

Any study of Zimmermann, or of Cuvilliés, or the Asams, or Johann Michael Fischer, should begin with a scenic tour of Bavaria. To Sitwell's rhapsody I would add evocations of carved Maypoles and of mouse-colored cows (in lieu of white oxen) and stands of black-green *Tannenbäume* (in lieu of cypress avenues) set in the brilliant yellow-greens of the rolling farmlands. According to the season, I would add the pink and pale green lights on the snows of a winter sunset, or the white Alps above the fields of flowers, or the tender green of freshly cut birch-boughs placed along the interior walls of churches, linking art with nature in purest pagan ritual to honor the Virgin Mary as Queen of Spring.

Anyone who knows the architecture of Southern Germany at first hand—that is, in its rela-

This pilgrimage church, a dependency of the nearby abbey of Steingaden, was the last major work of Zimmermann, and the largest.

Exterior of Die Wies, 1745-54, from the north

Interior of Die Wies, towards the choir

The single piers used as supports at Steinhausen are here replaced by double columns, and the decoration is more florid, though held to the surface by a blondness not evident in the photograph. The immediate effect is of space and light rather than of proliferated ornament.

Interior of Die Wies looking west from the choir

When filled with pilgrims, as here, Die Wies does not seem excessively ornamented. Its interior is as sensitive to changes of light as that of a gothic cathedral.

Dominican convent, Siessen, aerial view

Interior of convent church, Siessen, 1726–33

This view from the organ loft shows the relatively simple space composition of this early work of Zimmermann's, moulded by a series of flat cupolas on pendentives supported by strongly projecting wall piers. The upper range of windows contains the ear-lobe shapes (here inverted) characteristic of Zimmermann. White and gold predominate in the delicate stucco and the ironwork of the railing.

tion to nature—also knows that a romantic response to its beauty is altogether appropriate. In fact, it is inescapable. The surrounding scenic effects are those of Dürer, Cranach *(Rest on the Flight to Egypt)* and Altdorfer. These condition the mind as one enters a Zimmermann church or Neumann's Vierzehnheiligen, or even the massive Schloss Pommersfelden. The formalism of this architecture is only an appearance; its symmetry is merely its discipline. While its origins take one to Roman baroque and to French *Régence*, it is never so grandiloquent as the one nor so factitious as the other. For nature is both its root and its inspiration.

Although French rococo design books supplied a grammar of ornament for Bavarian artisans, nature was no less important as a source. The forms of candelabra and of mural interlace often seem to echo those long rows of stag horns that embellish the corridors of every self-respecting *Schloss* and *Gasthaus*. Horn forms lead to the forms of branches and thickets (as they led Dürer's attention in the engraving of *St. Eustace*), and these lead back to other ornamental inventions of eighteenth-century Germany. The larger panels in the bedroom of the Amalienburg offer particularly interesting examples, and others are to be found at Die Wies.

A pilgrimage church in the fields below the Allgäuer Alps near Füssen, Die Wies is Dominikus Zimmermann's best-known work. Its ravishingly lovely site is partly responsible for its fame. By this I mean only that other works of Zimmermann, just as remarkable as Die Wies but enjoying no such setting, are apparently little known out-

The interior complexities of this late work of Zimmermann's are well masked from without, though the projecting absidiole of the transept arm and the elaborate broken outlines of the windows contrast with the simple exterior of the earlier convent church at Siessen.

Within the chapel's modest dimensions Zimmermann's fantasy has bent the simplicity of the main structural lines, broken through the horizontal string courses and found its climax in an altar conceived like a divine conflagration, rising like smoke through a dome-within-a-dome.

Exterior (above) and interior (below) of pilgrimage chapel, Poering, c. 1755

side of Germany. The pilgrimage church at Steinhausen, the Franciscan convent church at Günzburg and the library of the Abbey of Schussenried appear, with Die Wies, in most good German books on the architecture of the period. But the lesser known works of Zimmermann, both early and late, are hardly mentioned except in Dehio's incisive summaries in his handbook and in occasional local brochures. Even Die Wies is not mentioned in the 1914 Baedeker for Southern Germany, though it rates a paragraph, with astral emphasis, in the new (1950) edition for Munich and its environs. Not many Germans, and hardly any Americans, have followed Zimmermann's trail very far. Yet a baker's dozen of his exquisite confections still exist in the region between Ulm and the mountains south of Munich. Besides the four major works mentioned above, there are, among others, the Dominican convents at Mödingen (near Dillingen) and Siessen (near Saulgau), both early works; the Johanniskirche in Landsberg, the chapels at Poering and Welden, and the village church at Eresing—all late works, as elaborate as they are diminutive.

Dominikus Zimmermann (1685-1766) was born at Wessobrunn near the south end of the Ammersee. Here an important tradition of stuccowork had developed over the years. Artisans from Wessobrunn were employed as far afield as at Petersburg and Potsdam, as well as in Poland,

Switzerland and Austria. Dominikus' older brother Johann Baptist (1680-1758), a specialist in both stucco and fresco, reached his zenith in the stucco ornament for the Amalienburg in Munich, the masterpiece of the Paris-trained Cuvilliés. Something of Dominikus' French flair, which is particularly in evidence at Steinhausen, may derive from Johann Baptist's association with Cuvilliés. The Zimmermanns often worked together, like the brothers Asam, and Steinhausen is one of the best examples of their collaboration. Johann Baptist painted the frescoes there and no doubt had a part in designing the elaborate stucco decorations. It was his brother, however, who left a signature (in stucco) under the organ-loft, which reads: DOMINIKUS ZIMMERMANN ARCHITT E STUCKADOR LANDSBERGENSIS.

Landsberg, where Dominikus became a citizen in 1716, is only fifteen miles northwest of Wessobrunn. It is still closer to Vilgertshofen, a pilgrimage church of the late seventeenth century by Johann Schmutzer, under whom Dominikus appears to have served his apprenticeship. The stucco ornament of Vilgertshofen is Italianate in style and rather dry in execution. It is the best

Exterior and interior of pilgrimage church, Steinhausen, 1727-33

Although begun only a year after Siessen, Steinhausen, the most elaborate of Zimmermann's early works, marks a tremendous advance. Except for the western tower, the mass is symmetrical; verticality is striking, and the gables have a somewhat late-gothic flavor. The large western door is reserved for special occasions, and the church is normally entered through the beveled faces, whence the interior space first appears from its best, off-center angle. The oval plan is defined by free-standing piers; these contrast superbly with brown and gold altars and pulpit—the only reminder of late-seventeenth-century decorative practice in an otherwise purely rococo design. The ceiling fresco is by Dominikus' brother, Johann Baptist. The whole shows the influence of Swabian rather *than Bavarian taste; Steinhausen is in Swabia, though the Zimmermanns were of course Bavarian.*

example of Zimmermann's point of departure as a decorator. The façade of the Rathaus of Landsberg, which he stuccoed about 1720, shows how far he had progressed by the age of thirty-five from what his masters had taught him.

Dominikus became a member of the town council of Landsberg in 1734. Both at Steinhausen and later at Die Wies (again, under the organ-loft) he signed himself as "from Landsberg." The inscription at Die Wies, like the design of the church itself, is in the local tongue, whereas Steinhausen, with a signature in Latin, achieves the sort of purity and detachment that one associates with the best European and American art of the eighteenth century. Without exaggeration Steinhausen may be called Mozartian; but it was completed in 1733—twenty-three years before Mozart was born, and only a year after the birth of Haydn.

Die Wies, completed in 1754, is Zimmermann's most purely Bavarian work. Sitwell develops this theme in another enchanted paragraph. Die Wies, he says, is best thought of as a mountain church. Such works "represent the art of toy-making, of clock-making, even the cuckoo clock, in apotheosis. It is the spangle and tinsel of the Christmas tree made permanent. . . . No other race in the world has had the patience to prolong this ephemeral decoration into permanence" (*German Baroque Sculpture*, London, Duckworth, 1938, page 14).

The apotheosis is, however, strictly confined to the interior. The exterior guards the secret well. Its pale buff masses, capped by the same dark red tiles that cover the Bavarian farmhouses, form a severe envelope. Only the white window trim and a few flourishes at the façade give a hint of what is within. The exterior harmonizes so perfectly with nature that its expressiveness is chiefly one of tact. Sitwell has observed in the roof line of Die Wies an echo of the silhouette of the range of mountains to the south. The point is well taken, even though Zimmermann had already developed a similar composition of masses at Günzburg, where there are no mountains.

Beautiful as Die Wies is in the winter snows, the full impact is lost if one does not enter it from a world of green and suddenly experience the flash of sunlight on cool blue, shrimp pink and gold against a dazzling white ground. It is better when all the snow is within. Pale green also plays a part, though a minor one, in the decorative scheme; it is best understood as a delicate reference to the green outdoors. In winter, when it is the only green, it assumes too much a role of contrast. Like other Bavarian interiors, that of Die Wies unites winter's crispness with the more clement seasons. It is refreshing to the spirit, like the sight of crocuses in the snow.

All Zimmermann's works are small in size and fragile in effect. Interestingly enough, the design he submitted for Ottobeuren, the most colossal of the South German monastic churches, was rejected, and the commission went to Johann Michael Fischer, who could better handle effects of imperial splendor. If Fischer approaches Bach and the baroque, Zimmermann approaches Rameau and the rococo. He recalls the baroque past less than any other German architect of his time except Cuvilliés. If we can reach him through his art (a dangerous enterprise), he was surely an exquisite. It is not altogether surprising that in a century dominated by the taste of women, Dominikus Zimmermann specialized in designing convents. Nor would it be hard to imagine Steinhausen and Die Wies—pilgrimage churches both—in the care of nuns.

Façade of Rathaus, Landsberg, c. 1720

The stucco ornament, an early work of Dominikus Zimmermann's, shows the influence of the Italianate style of his Wessobrunn masters but reveals elements of his personal style in its narrow vertical emphasis, crisp edges and curvilinear interlace.

PATRONAGE, PATRIOTISM AND TASTE IN MID-19TH-CENTURY AMERICA

Lillian Beresnack Miller

"An artist in my opinion should never be trammeled by those for whom he is endeavoring to do his best, and is in almost all cases the only true judge of what ought to be done." So wrote Robert Gilmor, Jr., of Baltimore to Thomas Cole in 1826 in relation to two commissions he had given the painter. Yet, with little reluctance, he proceeded to lay down his specifications:

"Water should be introduced in one, and would be well in both, one being *falling* water, and the other *still lake* water, reflecting the play of light on a slight motion of part of it, which may also be effected by introducing deer or cattle drinking, or a canoe with Indians paddling on it. The boat race in Mr. Cooper's last novel would be a happy introduction. . . . It would give animation & interest to the whole—I should also like to have in the other some *known* subject from Cooper's novels to enliven the landscape. . . . "

That patrons should participate in the creating of a work of art in such a manner was by no means unique in America during the second quarter of the nineteenth century. These early art patrons were men whose youth had been influenced by the tremendous wave of national consciousness that had accompanied the close of the War of 1812. Their enthusiastic ambition "to make the desert bloom like a rose" was large enough to include also the creation of a native culture which would at once reflect and serve the developments in political and economic life. "Nothing more strongly evinces the progress of a nation in wealth and refinement than the state of its Fine Arts," proclaimed the *New York Journal of Commerce* in 1838—a declaration which by this time had grown trite from excessive use. Thus motivated by a high sense of personal duty to aid in the formation of a native culture, and confident in their own artistic judgments, bankers and merchants entered fearlessly into active co-operation with their artist friends, often planning a work from its inception to its final framing and at least exerting their influence over the subject matter and treatment.

The willingness of the artists to meet such requirements, in general if not always in points of detail, seldom involved any loss of principle or integrity, for they shared the culture and tastes which determined the esthetic ideas of their patrons. Together artist and patron of the pre-Civil War era co-öperated to establish an atmosphere of encouragement and sympathy for the fine arts which was necessary for any subsequent art developments in this country.

What were the tastes, then, of these self-styled Lorenzos, and what were the sources of these tastes? How did this collaboration work, and what did it signify in relation to the art created during these years?

Taste had broadened considerably by 1825. Portraits no longer constituted Americans' chief experience with the fine arts and, indeed, the artist's task had come to be viewed as something nobler, more ideal, than the taking of "counterfeit presentments." Partly responsible for this expansion of taste, and at the same time expressive of it, was the increasing number of copies from, or original works by, sixteenth- and seventeenth-century European artists—the Poussins, Caravaggio, Claude, Ruysdael, Raphael, Correggio, Rembrandt, Teniers and Van Ostade among others—which were being absorbed into private collections. Commercial relations and increased wealth had sent many American families to the continent "for information and amusement," excursions which usually included visits to galleries and picture collections. The Americans who traveled abroad in the late 1820's and 'thirties seldom wandered into the studios of contemporary European artists, as they did during the following decades, but were content to view the accepted masterworks of artists whose names were historically familiar and with whose paintings they were already somewhat acquainted through the prints and engravings that were available in local book and print shops. For those Americans who remained at home, there were many public exhibitions at which works by these painters could be examined; and by the 1830's it was not unusual for young American artists to have their studies

Emanuel Leutze, Founding of Maryland, c. 1865, oil, 52 x 73", collection Maryland Historical Society

abroad financed by interested merchants who received repayment in the artists' copies from the old masters. Inevitably, then, when these same men decided to commission original works by their young protégés, their ideas about art were influenced in great measure by familiarity with the painters of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

These European artists demonstrated especially how various types of subject matter might be adapted to the needs of an aspiring native culture and provide the foundations for a truly American art. In the view of its advocates, a national art had not only to portray the social and physical beauty of the young republic; it had also to be intellectually inspiring and spiritually invigorating if it were to express the country's highest ideals and refine its tastes. Historical and scriptural compositions seemed best to answer this need. As a visitor to the Boston Athenaeum remarked in 1831, these "lay open the deepest springs of feeling. They stir up those hidden sympathies of our nature. . . . " But hitherto such paintings had been conceived chiefly in terms of huge canvases for exhibition purposes. With the arrival in this country of such works as Breughel's *Christ Restoring Sight to the Blind* (1823, Robert Gilmor, Jr. collection), or Caravaggio's *Rachel at the Well* (1834, W. I. Davis collection), Americans became aware that these subjects could successfully be expressed on smaller canvases more suitable for the parlor or library. By the mid-century the demand for scenes from Scripture and from American history was providing work for such painters as Huntington, Leutze, Page and Chapman on a scale that would surely have been astonishing to earlier artists like Morse, Trumbull or Vanderlyn.

In the same way, the Flemish and Dutch painters suggested the possibility that an American art might profitably exploit the native social scene, just as Catherine Maria Sedgwick and other folk novelists of the day were doing. It was from his study of these painters that Luman Reed, for instance, one of the more ardent cultural nationalists, got the idea of having Mount and Durand fill his art gallery with scenes from rural life—an interior of a barn with figures, a woman churning cheese under a shed, a series of panels showing school let out, farmers eating their dinner under a tree, children playing blindman's buff, and the like—art productions which he hoped would demonstrate that Americans could "make something of ourselves, out of our own materials, and we shall then be independent of others."

It was primarily in the field of landscape painting, however, that Americans were influenced by the European masters. Poussin, Claude,

William S. Mount, Sportsman's Last Visit, 1835, oil, 21½ x 17½", Melville Collection, Suffolk Museum, Stony Brook, L. I.

Ruysdael, Salvator Rosa drew their attention to the artistic elements in their own environment: the picturesquesness of America's rugged mountain and rock formations, tangled forests, unrestrained rivers and waterfalls; the pastoral charm of her quiet brooks, placid lakes and ordered fields. It soon became quite commonplace for Americans educated in the arts to view their landscape through the works of these painters. So, in 1834, Philip Hone found "the lofty mountains and the rich vallies" of Northampton, Massachusetts, "with the pretty village, its neat white houses and the spires of its numerous places of worship" invested with the charm of a Ruysdael landscape; and James Fenimore Cooper seemed to delight in placing his primitive hero, Deerslayer, in scenes and situations on the lake at Cooperstown, New York, to which he felt the brush of Salvator Rosa would have brought infinite credit.

The desire that now grew for American scenes and American views was to a large extent responsible for the popularity of the painters of the so-called Hudson River School. C. G. Child of Philadelphia, for example, hoped that Cole would paint him a scene in which "the gorgeous colors of our Forest trees in autumn might be introduced, the bright reds, the orange and deep brown which make such striking contrasts and which alone are found in great beauty in this country. . . . "; A. N. Skinner of New Haven dreamed of "a true American landscape" painted by Cole, in which he might see "what is the most delightful of all sights, a rich green valley just pictured after a shower in the soft repose of a summer sunset upon which the 'increasing Mountain-shadows fall' "; J. C. Gray of Boston commissioned a study from nature from the pencil of Asher B. Durand—an American landscape, he emphasized, without buildings, for he disapproved of the "angularity" of the native architecture.

It is not surprising that landscape painting should have captured the imagination of Americans of this generation. America was still largely a forest land, "a great sloven continent," as Emerson put it, "nature sleeping, overgrowing, almost conscious, too much by half for man in the picture, and so giving a certain *tristesse*, like the rank vegetation of swamps and forests seen at night." But in the eastern states there was already a suggestion that this primeval environment might soon be lost, and Americans who were sensitive to the beauty around them were even more anxious to have it caught and recorded on canvas. There was, of course, irony in the fact that the very men of wealth who by their industry and investments were encouraging the stripping and defacing of the natural landscape were at the same time eager to pay their artists fair-sized sums to have its attractive features preserved. Jonathan Sturges, for example, a New York merchant and a fairly active investor in railroads, sympathizing with Cole's melancholy at seeing "the beauties of nature swept away to make room for avarice," was glad to commission a picture which would show the Valley of the Catskill before "the art of modern improvements" had found a footing there. The complacency behind his remark, "We are truly a destructive people," was more than matched by that displayed by Philip Hone, whose investments in coal mining, canals, railroads and textile mills afforded him the means whereby he could embark on "a party of pleasure" to Paterson, New Jersey, and mourn over the "cotton spinning dirty village" and "everlasting noise of spinning jennies and power looms" which had replaced the green trees and singing of birds; he also was the happy owner of three of Cole's "umbrageous" landscapes.

Out of their intimacy and involvement with nature, Americans interested in art consistently demanded a truthful and distinct rendering of her features, a literalism which could only be obtained by careful and minute study of the object or scene to be imitated. Their interest even in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century masters was intensified by their feeling that these had achieved their excellence primarily because they had adhered to nature. John R. Murray's partiality for Murillo was created by his impression that the artist had taken nature for his guide, "and he painted her with his pencil dipped in her own colours, and was directed by her Genius"; Robert Gilmor, Jr., recommended Claude, Poussin, Ruysdael and Salvator Rosa to his young protégés Cole and Mount because he felt that those artists had mastered the art of painting landscapes from nature; Luman Reed purchased a Dutch artist's

Dogs and Game not because he liked the subject—in fact, he did not admire it at all—but because in its execution, in its very real presentation of its life-sized figures, it was a "first-rate specimen of the art."

This emphasis on a realistic art was not just the continuation of a literal-mindedness which had marked American taste since colonial days; it was now, for better or worse, a partially articulated esthetic ideal, closely bound to the notion of a national art. Luman Reed expressed this connection between a natural and a national art when he wrote to George W. Flagg in 1835 that he was delighted to hear the painter denounce the modern French school of painting: "pure simple nature is the school after all . . ." he wrote, "I hope you will not turn off a picture until the work is masterly executed. . . . I really look to you to give a spring to the art in this country, not by startling objects and gorgeous coloring & a thousand incongruities to catch the gaze of the vulgar, but by boldness of design, truth in expression & simple arrangement of figures and coloring that shall bring our nature itself to view. . . . "

"Our nature" is of course the key phrase here; for Americans of this generation enjoyed the belief that they were a race apart, and that their landscape was as distinctive as their institutions. This conviction was at times carried to the somewhat ridiculous extreme reached by the *New York Journal of Commerce* in 1846 when, in its enthusiasm over Vanderlyn's national painting, *The Landing of Columbus,* it was led to proclaim that the work was "a proud triumph to American Art and genius. The first impression made upon our mind was that the sky, water and whole scenery were *American.* . . . " Even in their more subdued moments, however, Americans insisted that their art represent their landscape and their people as they were, firm in the conviction that since the physical world was a symbol of the spiritual, the mere capturing of the external features of the life around them would reveal the basic morality and idealism of the democratic way of life. In turn, the use of American materials and the influence of American ideals were bound to produce, as Charles Eliot Norton wrote in 1855, "nobler pictures than Titian or Raphael ever painted or dreamed of, because given equal powers of coloring and drawing . . . we shall have pictures painted by men whose imaginations are refined, whose conceptions are ennobled by their sense of the moral relations under which they work."

This admixture of nationalism, naturalism and morality helps to explain the taste of the period as it revealed itself in contemporary picture collections: in the large, melodramatic historical subjects such as Leutze's *Washington Crossing the Delaware* (formerly Marshall O. Roberts collection, New York, 1856) or the same artist's *Mrs. Schuyler Firing her Corn Fields on the Approach of the British* (C. M. Leupp collection, New York, 1856); in the sentimental religious pieces such as Huntington's *Mercy's Dream* or Chapman's *Rebecca at the Well* (M. O. Roberts collection); in the meticulously painted and prosaic views of local scenery such as those by W. C. Wall which were to be found in so many Pittsburgh collections in the 1850's; in the smoothly idealized paintings of American children, such as those in Jonathan Sturges' collection—Weir's *A Child's Devotion,* Ingham's *Flower Girl,* Edmonds' *The Bashful Cousin,* Inman's *The Newsboy* and Gray's *The Young Poetess*—pictures which showed healthy, frank, modest girls and boys, respectable even when poor, engaged in the virtuous activities

Emanuel Leutze, **Mrs. Schuyler Firing Her Corn Fields on the Approach of the British,** *from the engraving after the painting, c. 1856, courtesy* ***Frick Art Reference Library***

Daniel Huntington, Mercy's Dream, 1858, oil, 84 x 66¼", Metropolitan Museum of Art

of prayer, industry or literature. Such paintings in both subject matter and technique seemed to satisfy the demand for art that was "carefully and elaborately worked up" and expressive of American ideals.

How could a painting actually express such ideals? Walt Whitman's response to Walter Libbey's *Boy with a Flute* in the Brooklyn Art Union exhibition of 1851 suggests one way in which Americans thought an artist might capture the American character. A European artist, Whitman held, would have imposed "the stamp of class" on the boy, portraying him as nothing but "a young boor"; but the American artist, in the "spirited well-being of the figure," in such "exquisitely fine" details as the natural grace of his hands holding the flute, had so rendered the boy that, country lad though he was, he might still some day become President, or even better, "an editor of a leading newspaper." Sleek brushwork and an emphasis on genteel detail created generalized paintings which complacent Americans found easy to accept as "fine in sentiment" and "refined in character."

These phrases, in fact, typify the esthetic criteria by which Americans of the mid-nineteenth century judged art. Such vague and subjective concepts were concerned not with the intrinsic qualities of a work of art but rather with the effect it exerted on the individual—with its ability, as a kind of spiritual medicine, to purge the individual and national soul of the gross effects of too much materialistic living:

"The man who is a sensualist . . . whose chief care is that his table should be well furnished with delicious viands, whose eye lights up only when bottles and glasses begin to rattle . . . is rarely a lover of the arts. . . . And so it is with the treacherous, the cruel, the sly and the crafty; their selfish and corrupt passions unfit them for the

John Vanderlyn, Landing of Columbus, c. 1846, oil, 142 x 214". The Capitol, Washington, D. C.

Charles Cromwell Ingham, Flower Girl, 1846, oil, 36 x 28⅞", Metropolitan Museum of Art

Opposite: W. C. Wall, View of the Youghiogheny River Falls at Ohio Pyle, Fayette County, Pennsylvania, 1847, oil, 24 x 36", collection Mr. & Mrs. J. Robert Rodgers, Slippery Rock, Penna., photograph Hess

tranquil enjoyment of the arts, which are in their nature social, kindly and purifying. . . . The study of the fine arts having then an elevating and softening influence, a tendency to render man less sensual, more benevolent, more alive to the beauties of nature and truth, should be as generally cultivated as possible" (Miss Ludlow, *A General View of the Fine Arts, Critical and Historical,* introduction by Daniel Huntington, New York, 1851, pp. 11-12).

This emphasis on improvement provided one answer which art patrons could use against those critics who felt that the fine arts were the offspring of luxury and decadence, corrupting "the plain and republican habits of our ancestors." It furnished artists with a status of eminence and a justification for their existence in a society which put its highest value on production for use; and, finally, it helped establish the social desirability of possessing "taste," which, once wealth had in-

creased and become more widely dispersed among the population, promised a broader base of support for the fine arts.

When Tocqueville visited this country in 1831 he foresaw this potential expansion of the market for art, and with his usual perspicacity predicted that the increase in the number of consumers and in the number of works of art produced would be accompanied by a corresponding loss of quality in the art life of the country. It took a decade before it was evident that his prediction was on the way to fulfilment, for in the 'thirties, under the encouragement of pioneering patrons like Luman Reed and Robert Gilmor, Jr., the art of this country gave promise of future improvement and even possible greatness. These were men who, though they shared the esthetic ideas of their age, had educated their tastes by careful study of the old masters and so possessed a surer instinct in matters of art. Often by their sound advice they were able to guide the young artists whom they befriended—Doughty, Cole, Mount, Flagg and Durand—into channels better suited to their particular talents than those into which their own untrained taste or the dictates of the age might have led them. But by the 'forties a new and larger class of patrons appeared, who lacked the deep experience with earlier art that had enabled their predecessors to exercise discrimination and judgment in art matters. They were content to accept the purely imitative and slick, the grandiose and melodramatic, that marked the collections we have discussed above.

Under these circumstances Tocqueville's hypothesis became fact: artists facing a highly favorable market for their productions were "no longer able to soar to what is great" but were content "to cultivate what is pretty and elegant" (*Democracy in America*, edited by Phillips Bradley, New York, 1945, Vol. II, p. 51). This deterioration of taste was not entirely caused by the creation of a mass market—as Tocqueville was inclined to believe—so much as it was by the fact that the artist was working in a tradition of patronage that assumed a close cooperation between him and his patron. This was a system which worked fairly successfully as long as the patron was relatively well educated, but unsuccessfully if he had had little artistic training or experience. It was a system, moreover, which accustomed artists to conform rather than to take the lead in matters of taste. A letter from the young artist Charles Wyllys Elliott to the art patron J. P. Ridner of New York, is typical; here Elliott states his decision to send two pictures to Ridner for his "criticism and advice as to sales," for "these are the first I have ever put forward for the market and I am aware that the public taste must be consulted and not my own." It takes a rare artist, in any case, to forge ahead on his own; such independence was especially difficult during these years when prosperity seemed assured to almost any painter who could meet the requirements of Americans eager for refinement and culture.

By the end of the 'fifties, the growing market for art encouraged the entrance of the middleman into the picture trade and established the trend towards the development of an impersonal art market. Artists were now more on their own, and success from here on came to depend on factors other than a sympathy for the arts which was born out of patriotism, morality or vague theory.

Individuals inspired by such motives had, in any case, done enough for the fine arts during the first half of the century to establish them solidly in the cultural life of the country. Certainly the foundations on which the museums and art centers of the post-Civil War years were built were laid in great part by these early patrons and art collectors; and it was the museums, with their collections of all kinds of art, good and bad, which were to provide the comparisons and sources of information about art whereby new esthetic standards could be arrived at and new tastes developed.

John G. Brown, Berry Boy, c. 1875, oil, 23 x 14½", George W. V. Smith Art Museum, Springfield, Mass. (From Oliver W. Larkin, Art and Life in America, New York, 1949)

Contributors

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A frequent contributor to MAGAZINE OF ART and to other periodicals in America and abroad, BEAUMONT NEWHALL is curator of the George Eastman House at Rochester. His *History of Photography*, published in 1948 by the Museum of Modern Art and Simon and Schuster, remains the definitive work on the subject.

CHARLES S. KESSLER is at present in London as a Fulbright Fellow, studying English art. He has taught at Columbia College and Champlain College. His article is based on research done at Columbia University under the direction of Prof. Meyer Schapiro.

HOLGER CAHILL's friendship with the late Niles Spencer dates back to the 'twenties, when the artist was just developing his steadfastly personal style. Mr. Cahill is the author of many books and articles on art, and of two novels.

S. LANE FAISON, JR., is chairman of the art department at Williams College and president of the College Art Association of America. In 1950-51 he served as director of the Central Collecting Point maintained by the State Department at Munich. While there he frequently visited monuments of the German baroque and last summer taught a course on this subject at the University of California.

LILLIAN BERESNACK MILLER taught literature at Bard College from 1946-49 and since then has been working for her doctorate in history at Columbia University. Her article—part of a study of patronage and taste in America from 1815-76—is based on research made possible through two grants from the American Council of Learned Societies.

Forthcoming

The December issue will include "Pleasures and Miseries of Collecting" by ROLAND PENROSE; FORBES WATSON, "Arthur Bowen Davies"; ANNIE JOLY-SEGALEN, "Paul Gauguin and Victor Segalen"; KENNETH B. LINDSAY, "Kandinsky's Method and Contemporary Criticism"; and extracts from Orozco's autobiography.

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Letters to the Editor

Sir:

I was interested in the editorial, *Minding the Artist,* in your March issue, describing an evening with a group of New York artists. . . .

Startling differences between Mr. Goldwater's experience and my own appear at once. The colorful scene he describes could scarcely take place in Oregon, which offers no such opportunity for organized hostility, since the few art writers of the area are both innocent and friendly. When they are courted by artists, the wooing is candid and without ambivalence. Opposition, if any, is likely to be almost silent, and accompanied by a tacit recognition of the difficulties involved in reporting art for common consumption. When writers set up as critics, and fall short of an irreducible minimum of that rectitude and knowledge which artists feel is required for the role, the artists here, as often as not, show a tendency to withdraw rather than join battle. This is an oversimplification, of course. But the overt hostility, the cruelly complicated intensity of the New York artists . . . would be wildly improbable in Portland.

The contrast of setting—the metropolitan atmosphere of competition and tension as against bucolic quietude—is too facile an explanation. For one thing, artists make their setting as much as the setting forms them. . . . It is very easy to go to New York; and many artists, both "important" and obscure, have chosen to go there from the South, the Middle West or the Far West, because they require the support of feeling *au courant,* or the stimulation of conflict. An even larger number choose to remain away—very often after having spent a few years in New York. These artists have found that a small, familiar and relatively untroubled environment is the best encouragement to production. Perhaps the extremes are too great. . . . But choice, I insist, as much as chance gives the two groups their disparate character.

Mr. Goldwater says, "The artist today is still heir to the romantic tradition of the nineteenth century which measures a man's greatness by the degree of his neglect and looks forward to such a reversal of values by posterity that contemporary recognition is necessarily suspect." The artists I know don't seem to feel this way. They like to sell, they like to have their work admired by people of taste and judgment, and even show a generous willingness to be admired by quite simple, uninstructed people. Most of them are conscious of themselves and their work as related to other human activities and are aware that recognition, soon or late, by some section of the public, is a measure of their success as artists—as persons performing a function which is indispensable in any culture. . . . Certainly there are artists who find the machinery through which recognition is achieved upsetting to some inner equilibrium that their work requires. A few find it *too* disturbing, and these withdraw—geographically or spiritually or both. Such a voluntary detachment from the disquieting aspects of life has been known to exact an almost prohibitive price—a growing sense of having inadvertently cut the ties with life itself. But a few artists seem able to keep these ties strong, and yet achieve what would be—in the eyes of most non-artists—a clear, unequivocal, withdrawal. . . . I dwell somewhat on the matter of withdrawal, because it may be the only local manifestation which (rare as it is) might suggest a resistance to recognition comparable to the ambivalence that Mr. Goldwater finds so hard to take in the New York group. . . .

Mr. Goldwater speaks of the "obvious dedication" of his group. Out here, most artists seem to me to be content with the not inconsiderable but more earthly satisfactions attendant upon having found their proper work. It is work which is not as much honored as the practice of medicine or law. But it has corresponding advantages, and I think many artists are aware of them. Being less understood, the practice of art is less regimented and carries with it, therefore, both the delights and the personal disciplines of freedom. In any case, for better or worse, it is *their work,* the work for which they feel best suited. As adults, they are at least intermittently aware that no profession is wholly satisfactory in all its aspects, at all times. . . .

One reason for the artist's resistance to analysis of art by non-artists is (Mr. Goldwater says) a possessive attitude towards his work. . . . It seems to me that the work of art *is* an extension of the artist, any time, any place: an extension of the deepest, most important, most interesting self he has. Placing it before a public made up largely of people neither serious enough nor sufficiently instructed to look at serious art is no small thing, and often requires real courage. At the same time exhibiting is, of course, a great satisfaction and may be a triumph. The one feeling by no means precludes the other, and no artist need feel apologetic about "desiring and fearing" public display of his work. It is quite natural to feel the need to reach his contemporaries through his work, and at the same time to feel the utmost sensitivity, even trepidation, at presenting the work which he is quite right to feel is an "extension of himself." If it is not that, it is simply empty handicraft, and not worth the time either he or the writers are spending on it.

RACHAEL GRIFFIN
Portland, Oregon

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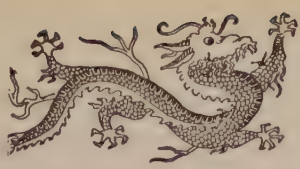
Book Reviews

Jacques Barzun, *Berlioz and the Romantic Century*, Boston, Atlantic-Little, Brown, 1950. Vol. I, xv + 573 pp., 9 illus.; Vol. II, 511 pp., 9 illus. $12.50.

Hector Berlioz was a fabulous man, and it takes a fabulous man to handle him. Jacques Barzun is a professor of history at Columbia and the author of some eight or ten previous books, only one of which—*Darwin, Marx, Wagner*—touches on the field of musicology; but *Berlioz and the Romantic Century* reads as if its author had spent his entire life in single-hearted pursuit of this one subject. It is one of the most monumentally complete critical biographies in the entire musical literature, and it must be accorded a place in the history of American musicology alongside Thayer's *Beethoven*.

Mr. Barzun's bibliography runs to one thousand four hundred and nine titles and fills one hundred eighteen pages. It is a measure not only of his industry but also, in a sense, of his indignation, for in this luxuriant quantity of material there is probably more hopeless stupidity, misunderstanding and downright falsehood than in the material on any other composer who ever lived —Wagner alone excepted. The author wields a doughty lance on the misinformed, the misguided and the malicious; and if in the end he goes overboard and paints a picture of a paragon whose every breath was righteous and whose least idea was a revelation from on high, one can perceive the reason for his exaggeration. And yet, when all is said and done, Barzun is closer to Berlioz than any previous biographer, and he is completely at home not only in the composer's music and literary works but also in the whole "romantic century" of which he was so signally a part.

In 1928 Richard Aldrich, then music critic of the *New York Times*, published an essay called "Berlioz Today" in which we are told that "the interesting things about Berlioz are literary, historical, technical, personal, psychological—almost anything but musical." The contemporary view is that the interesting things about Berlioz are literary, historical, technical, personal, psychological and, above all, musical. Aldrich, in attempting to document his view that Berlioz had had a fair hearing and had failed, actually demonstrated that he had had very little hearing at all. Today the situation is slightly better: Berlioz is a modern composer dawning out of the nineteenth-century



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past; as the figure of Wagner diminishes in juster perspective, that of Berlioz increases accordingly.

Barzun studies all the major works of Berlioz in considerable detail, down to and including the minor mistakes in the published scores. Like many contemporary critics, he inclines to dismiss the descriptive or "programmatic" side of this music rather glibly; yet that aspect of the music was at one time so grossly overemphasized and so little understood that one can readily understand why the modern Berliozians have little patience with it. On the other hand, Barzun is acquainted, to a degree unknown among professional musicologists, with the literature, visual arts, philosophy and history of Berlioz's period, and he replaces the conventional discussion of music versus "program" with a genuinely meaningful, searching and profound analysis of the music in terms of its total relationships.

At all times Barzun is an enthusiast: he can examine minute and recondite matters with warmth and delight, and marvel at major matters without pomposity. His book is dense in detail, yet justly proportioned. It is richly, not to say encyclopedically informative, but it is a work of literature as well. It is, in short, one of those rare achievements—a presentation and evaluation of fact by a thoroughly mature and sensitive mind.

ALFRED FRANKENSTEIN
San Francisco, Calif.

John Steegman, *Consort of Taste: 1830-1870*, London, British Book Centre, 1950, 338 pp. + 24 plates. $6.

Those who benefited by Mr. Steegman's study of the Regency Period, entitled *The Rule of Taste*, will gain equally by this sequel published sixteen years later, in which the Director of the Art Department of the National Museum of Wales wends his way through the more complex manifestations of English taste during the succeeding generation. In order to avoid the injustice of an evaluation based upon present-day standards, the author strives to look at the situation through contemporary eyes. Sprinkled throughout are opinions gleaned from the two periodicals, *Quarterly Review* and *Punch;* and included are references to and from the writings of John Ruskin and especially from those of Mrs. Charles (Elizabeth Rigby) Eastlake, whose ideas apparently are comfortably close to Mr. Steegman's, although often representing only the most advanced thinking of mid-nineteenth-century Englishmen.

Considering these four decades as a unit, and in terms of their own point of view, taste here has to do primarily with painting and secondarily with architecture. The decorative arts were not to come into their own again until immediately after this period. The principal protagonists of *Consort of Taste* are, first, Prince Albert (to whom the title of the book makes reference), who more than any-

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one else determined the form taken by the Crystal Palace Great Exhibition of 1851 and—as concerns painting—the equally important Manchester Fine Arts Exhibition of 1857, which widened the horizon on English connoisseurship of European painting; second, Sir Charles Eastlake, President of the Royal Academy and one of the important directors of the National Gallery; and last (but not least), Lady Eastlake, already mentioned because of her writings. In this review of the Victorian age we become aware of the two distinct manners in which painting and architecture recalled the past (especially the medieval): first, in subject but not in style; secondly, in style but not in building types.

The American scene is referred to twice, once with regard to our advanced use of heating, ventilating, plumbing and refrigeration (pp. 112-14), and again on the matter of the persistence here of the "Regency taste in its pure Grecian form . . . [which] survived in the United States till at least the middle of the 'forties" (p. 304). As a matter of record, of course, the Greek style lingered in force up to the time of the Civil War, or almost two decades longer than here indicated.

Consort of Taste achieves a pleasant balance between presenting a well-rounded picture without confusion and making a choice selection without oversimplification.

CLAY LANCASTER
Columbia University

Martin L. Wolf, *Dictionary of the Arts*, New York, Philosophical Library, 1951. xiii + 797 pp. $10.

The idea of a dictionary of the arts is a good one. It could be especially useful in the case of terms that are common to several arts, wherein it is often necessary to know accurately the varying differences in usage. Unfortunately the present volume, despite the hard work that went into it, falls considerably short of the valuable reference work it might be. The fault seems largely due to sloppy editing and revision. It is not to be expected that one person could immerse himself deeply enough in the details of all the topics purportedly covered (painting, sculpture, music, theatre, dance, literature, architecture, archeology, mythology, ceramics, costume, applied art) to provide foolproof definitions. But considering the extensive list of acknowledgments and the names of those included as consultants, it is hard to believe that Mr. Wolf submitted many of his formulations to the judgment of those upon whom he presumably relied for expert help.

In the hope that subsequent editions may cause this first attempt to be improved into the fine work it could be, it seems worth while to mention at least the type of corrections that are needed and to give a few examples. In the first place, there is no explanation of the system upon which the *Dic-*

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tionary is built: how it is organized, the principles followed, its scope, etc. It is, for instance, only through a parenthetical remark in Mr. Partridge's fulsome introduction that one gets a suggestion concerning the use of italics in the definitions. If these are indeed intended to serve as cross-references, then why include specific "see" references and "q.v." also? Perhaps this is done for emphasis? In any event, the system, whatever it is, should be clearly explained and should be used consistently.

It would be a great help if pronunciations were included, for such a work necessarily contains many specialized terms—which is its value—and the uninitiated reader or student, for whom the book is designed, will often be at a loss to know how to pronounce some unfamiliar word.

In general, where Mr. Wolf has had a technical process to describe he has done it directly, simply and accurately. Where stylistic questions are involved, however, he has often departed from straight description and used evaluative terms that frequently reveal the nineteenth-century point of view of his sources. See for instance his exposition of the term *baroque*. It is doubtful whether the description would be recognized or approved by modern art historians. And the use of the phrase *gentle elegance* in connection with Michelangelo is, to say the least, startling. Moreover, there is no indication that the term *baroque* is also used in music and literature—much less how. Similar problems arise with many terms of this kind, for example *Federal architecture, romanesque architecture, romanticism,* etc.

Many times, too, Mr. Wolf has failed to distinguish between different layers of concepts, and in the case of complex formal problems he therefore proves confusing and inadequate when not actually misleading. His descriptions of *gaillard* and *pavane,* for instance, are inadequate since neither mentions the other, nor are they brought together under *suite*. Under *fugue,* for another example, he has confused *stretto* with *double* or *triple fugue,* with which it is not connected. In this case, the *Harvard Dictionary of Music* manages to be precise, and there seems to be no good reason why Mr. Wolf's definition, though more condensed, could not have been equally clear. Again, his definition of *atonal* music seems to make little sense: as it stands, it applies almost equally to any form of polyphonic music, tonal or atonal. What, one also wonders, was his authority for saying that *ludi* is the original name for oratorios? And so on and so forth.

In such terms as *frisket paper,* Mr. Wolf fails to explain that this type of paper is so called from its use on the frisket, an important part of one type of printing press. In some cases, too, carelessness has led to downright inaccuracy, as in *Elzevir,* where he speaks of this great Dutch family of printers as having printed and published in England. A glance at any standard biographical dictionary, such as Lippincott's, might have corrected this, and the dates, too!

Pointing out these defects is not intended as carping criticism. In many respects this is a valuable book as it stands, and its scope is awe-inspiring when the work involved is considered. Perhaps it is necessary to launch such a work in a very imperfect state in order to learn its defects. In any event, Mr. Wolf gets an *A* for effort; but it is to be hoped that he and his publisher's editors will be equally zealous in preparing a revised edition.

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Katharine Kuh, *Art Has Many Faces*, New York, Harper, 1951. xiii + 185 pp., 271 plates, 7 in color. $6.50.

George A. Flanagan, *How to Understand Modern Art*, New York, Studio-Crowell, 1951. 334 pp., 150 illus. $5.50.

Art Has Many Faces by Katharine Kuh is another important milestone (still few in number) in the visual presentation of the visual arts. It effectively demonstrates the wisdom of her introductory statement: "When words play a secondary role, art will be better understood in terms of itself." Through a skilfully planned succession of finely reproduced pictures, the eye of the "reader" is entranced and enlightened.

The pictures relate to both nature and art and make use of all media—photography, drawing, painting, sculpture, architecture and diagram—using each to maximum visual effect in the teaching plan. Where color is called for, adequate color reproduction is employed. Words, of course, are also used, but "only as auxiliaries to point up and clarify the illustrations . . . aiding instead of directing the eye."

Mrs. Kuh is curator of the Gallery of Art Interpretation at the Art Institute of Chicago, and she is transferring to book form some of the new techniques that are so vital a part of the teaching programs of public museums and college art departments today. Her main theme, as indicated in her title, is the fabulous diversity of art. She emphasizes the liberty of the artist in selecting and arranging his material and his concern with such elements as line, color, shape, light, space and texture. She demonstrates the characteristics of materials and indicates how both materials and tools cause variations in art. She shows how environment has conditioned the artist in the past and how, in the present, he is influenced by the city, the machine, war, psychoanalytical thought and the concept of simultaneity.

As a conclusion to her book, Mrs. Kuh presents Klee, Mondrian and Picasso as "possibly the three most significant artists of the first half of this century." She gives good reasons for this opinion, but, to me, this is the one inharmonious part of the melodic whole. There is no need for "five-star" judgments in an introduction to art. If ratings must be included, why only three in a book emphasizing the many faces of art? To the "wonder" of Klee, the "structure" of Mondrian, and the "passion" of Picasso, Mrs. Kuh might well have added, among others, the "joy" of Matisse, the "splendor" of Rattner, the "moral grandeur" of Rouault.

How to Understand Modern Art by George A. Flanagan stresses the "importance of design and structure, the worth of personal expression, the desirability of vitality" in painting from Cézanne to Picasso. More literary and less visual than Mrs. Kuh's book, it contains much more history and biography. There is an excellent chapter on the art of children, and an amusing section on the relation of titles to pictures. As Mr. Flanagan points out, the picture illustrates the title in Bouguereau's *Nymph at Fountain*, but conversely in Klee's *One Who Understands*, the title illustrates the picture.

In the opinion of this reviewer, Mr. Flanagan is unduly pessimistic about the younger post-Picasso moderns, whom he sees as only imitators, floundering in a twilight of the gods. On his own criteria of strong design and personal expression, I wouldn't sell short a generation including Shahn, MacIver, Tobey, Graves, Stamos, Pollock, De Kooning and many others.

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Ernest Short, *A History of Religious Architecture*, New York, Norton, 1951. xix + 306 pp., 19 illus., 65 plates. $6.

The author of this book has written or edited more than a dozen volumes on the Bible, the theatre, painting, sculpture, world history, geopolitics and even a novel. Unfortunately, however, his great interest in the historical, religious and mythological milieu of architecture leaves little room for the discussion of the buildings.

The book is not without merit for the general reader. Written in a readable style, it contains excellent illustrations and diagrams, which, however, are not closely correlated with the text. But the book does not live up to the implication in the title that it is a general history of religious architecture. Despite the importance of France in the development of medieval architecture, the author devotes to it only thirty pages, as compared with forty pages given to the English medieval churches. He seems also to share with other romantic medievalists the belief that religious architecture after the medieval period was of little importance. Accordingly, he allots more than a hundred pages to the middle ages, but only twenty-five pages to the renaissance and baroque.

The book ends with a very brief chapter on nineteenth-century churches of the various revivals—mostly English and American Gothic. Twentieth-century religious architecture is not considered, but the author gives an interesting report in connection with his discussion of the mistreatment of Russian churches by the Communists and their atheistic propaganda: "Taklin (*sic*), the leading Bolshevik architect, designed a Temple of Reason, built of iron and glass, the whole erection being capable of movement by machinery, 'so as to give the impression of eternal energy,' as its builder explained." This report is almost completely inaccurate, from the name of the artist (which is consistently misspelled), to the purpose, nature and name of the monument, which was never built except as a small model.

DIMITRI TSELOS
University of Minnesota

Clay portrait head, North Peru, 400-600 A.D., from Heinrich U. Doering, The Art of Ancient Peru

Latest Books Received

Baldass, Ludwig, JAN VAN EYCK, New York, Phaidon (distributed by Garden City), 1952. 297 pp., 86 figs., 162 black-and-white + 8 color plates. $15.

Cooper, Douglas, HENRI DE TOULOUSE-LAUTREC (Library of Great Painters Portfolio Edition), New York, Abrams, 1952. 24 pp., 16 illus. + 10 color plates. $1.50.

Doering, Heinrich U., THE ART OF ANCIENT PERU, New York, Praeger, 1952. 55 text pp., 240 black-and-white + 5 color plates. $12.50.

Greenough, Charles Pelham, III, THE GRAPHIC WORKS OF BIRGER SANDZEN, Manhattan, Kansas, Kansas State College, 1952.

Jordan, Elijah, BUSINESS BE DAMNED, New York, Schuman, 1952. xiv + 267 pp. $4.

Kalgren, Bernhard, A CATALOGUE OF THE CHINESE BRONZES IN THE ALFRED F. PILLSBURY COLLECTION, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota, 1952. 228 pp. incl. 114 plates. $25.

NICOLE'S GUIDE TO PARIS, illus. by Pierre Berger, wood engraved by Armanelli, New York, De Milly, 1951. 206 pp. + 48 pp. appendix, 51 illus., 24 in color. $4.25.

Severini, Gino, THE ARTIST AND SOCIETY, New York, Grove, 1952 (translated by Bernard Wall), viii + 94 pp. $1.25.

Tschan, Francis J. SAINT BERNWARD OF HILDESHEIM: 3: ALBUM (Publications in Mediaeval Studies, Vol. XIII), Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame, 1952. 268 plates. $6.

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